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अर्धकथानक

HALF A TALE

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The *Ardhakathanaka*
translated, introduced and annotated by

Mukund Lath

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Half A Tale

A study in the interrelationship between autobiography and history

Illustrations by **GANESH PYNE**

Rajasthan Prakrit Bharati Sansthan, Jaipur

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Vinay

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publisher's note

The work presented here, the *Ardhakathanaka*, is perhaps the first autobiography in Indian literature. The versatile author, Banarasidas, was a merchant, a Jain religious leader and a poet of distinction belonging to the 17th century, the heyday of Mughal rule. Written in a colloquial mixture of Brajbhasha and the eastern dialects of Hindi, it is characterised by a candid self-revelation associated with modern autobiographical works. It is also valuable as a living document which projects a historical age through the experiences of a sensitive and uncommon man who yet belonged to the common populace.

Prakrit Bharati is happy to present this unique work in a new English translation titled *Half A Tale*. Dr. Mukund Lath, Indologist and author of *A Study of Dattilam* (an ancient text on the sacred music of India), and an English translation of the *Kalpa Sutra* (published earlier by the Prakrit Bharati), was persuaded to take up the translation of the *Ardhakathanaka*. He has added an introduction and a historical commentary to his work. The original text has been appended at the end. Prakrit Bharati is indebted to Dr. Lath for his labours.

Thanks are also due to Shri Ganesh Pyne for his expressive illustrations; to Vinay Jain for his assistance in the work from its inception to its publication; to Popular Printers, Jaipur, for having printed the work with care; and to Shri Sitaram Goel of Impex India, Delhi, who has willingly taken charge of its distribution and sale.

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Introduction

The *Ardhakathanaka* is a remarkable work. Written during the heyday of the Mughal rule in 1641 A. D., it is perhaps the only autobiography in the Indian tradition. Banarasi, its author, was evidently working without precedents. Yet he was surprisingly cognisant of the complexity of his task and the depth of introspection it needed. We find him commenting at the end of his narrative :

"In a man's life there is much that is too subtle to be palpable... Even in the tiny span of a day a man passes through myriad states of consciousness. The all-knowing Kevalin can perceive them, but even he cannot describe them in their fullness."

Banarasi was 55 years old when he wrote this autobiography. He called it the *Ardhakathanaka*, or *Half a Tale*, for he thought he had lived only half the total span of life allotted to man, which according to an ancient Jain tradition he quotes, is 110 years. However, he did not much outlive the completion of his *Half a Tale* and so what we have is, in effect, a full story.

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Banarasi was a Jain merchant born in the enterprising clan of the Srimals, who were keen businessmen, spread in Mughal times almost all over North India, with flourishing communities in every major town. Some Srimals held fairly important official posts in Muslim courts. Born in A.D. 1586, with Akbar ruling at the prime of his power, Banarasi spanned some of the most thriving years of the Mughal rule.

His childhood and adolescence were spent in Jaunpur—a town on the river Gomti, about 70 miles from Banaras—where his father was a jeweller. A merchant by training and profession, Banarasi was also a precocious poet and writer from early youth. His first work, a juvenile production, was a collection of love poems which he later threw away into the river in a fit of moral reprobation. His maturer works, most of which survive due to the collecting zeal of his friends and admirers, are mainly concerned with Jain doctrine and religion, the accent being on the inner spirit of the faith unencumbered by rigid, formal ritualism.

He was initiated early, at the age of fourteen, into the more earnest pursuits of life when he developed two consuming passions. One was love, for which he went to a prostitute. The other was knowledge, which remained a more lasting passion and led him to study books on many subjects, especially religion.

Much of his later youth was spent in Agra, where he met with repeated and dismal failures in his business ventures. Once, losing his entire capital, he lived for months as a penniless recluse till rescued from penury by a close relative.

Already at nineteen he realised the futility of love after experiencing a sudden conversion to religion. He became a pious observer of all the precepts of his faith, remaining for years a fastidious, ritual-practising Jain. Later, at the age of 35, he lost all faith in ritual practices and other extraneous duties and beliefs enjoined by religion, after another spiritual upheaval. He now began to denounce externalities in religion, making fun of them

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with unholy joy. He was drawn to a new, rising protestant movement among the Jains, called Adhyatma, which propagated a contemplative, inward-looking religion. He soon became its leader. With him, the Adhyatma movement grew into an important heterodoxy. The best testimony to his crucial contribution to the movement is that its orthodox opponents named it the 'Banarasi heresy'. The Adhyatma movement gave rise to a distinct Jain sect, the Terapanth sect of the Digambaras, which today is a powerful group with a large following. The Terapanth proudly declares itself an offshoot of Banarasi's Adhyatma, and reveres him as its Adiguru : the founder teacher.

The man himself was fascinating. All through life he retained a rare sense of joy and abandon. During his lean period in Agra, when he had no money even for his next meal, he used to play host every evening to a group of lively friends, singing love ballads and making light-hearted conversation. At the age of 55, as a committed religious leader among the Jains, one of the most solemn and ascetic of religious groups, he still had this irrepressible effervescence of character. "I often break into a dance when I am alone," he confesses at the end of his tale, as he gives his readers a short resume of his 'present temper', adding that he loved to act the jester and could not resist telling tall tales when in the right company.

The *Ardhakathanaka* has been called the life of a common man, a man belonging to the middle class. And certainly Banarasi lived a life closer to the common lot than the other Mughal memoir writers with whom we are familiar. We get from him a rare flavour of how it must have been to live and work as a modest merchant in Mughal cities, travel on the adventurous Mughal roads, buy and sell in the precarious Mughal markets and suffer sudden,

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unwarranted persecution at the hands of corrupt Mughal officials or whimsical Mughal emperors.

But to classify him according to economic class is not enough to place him properly in his milieu. His story impresses on us the importance in his life of his community, a social unit which was both larger and smaller than an economic class. For though it cut across economic brackets, it remained confined by ties of blood and common ancestry. A community also meant fellowship in a common religion, and consequently, a shared way of life embodied in social mores, moral norms, rules of behaviour, customs, institutions, beliefs and the like.

The form and texture of Banarasi's life and thought was shaped by his community to a degree unimaginable today, even though in India the community is still a potent social force. The Srimal clan and the larger Jain community—a homogenous confluence of several trading clans committed to Jainism—in which it was embedded, formed the matrix within which Banarasi remained rooted throughout his life, evolving later into a substantial religious leader. An individual in Banarasi's days encountered the larger social reality from within a close-knit community which surrounded him like a protective enclosure, acting as a buffer between him and the state. In the everyday world of a common man, his clan and community were the most immediate, intimate and consequential social facts of life.

The Jain community to which Banarasi belonged was even more in a position to function as a fairly autonomous body because of its affluence and the influence it wielded in the Mughal bureaucracy. It acted not only as the guardian of religious and social mores but also catered to more utilitarian needs, arranging for education, providing opportunities for trade and dispensing justice. Its tenacious confines provided a secure citadel for its members where they could nurture cherished values.

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A community's strong sense of a distinct identity was reflected in the manner in which it was housed. In every town, people of a single community lived grouped together in one compact space, the 'community quarter' as it was known. Arriving alone in a new town, the first thing Banarasi's mother did was to enquire for the quarter where the Srimals lived. In Fatehpur, Banarasi spent a few months with a Jain of the Oswal clan called Bhagvati Das, who lived in a district of the town where other Oswals also had their homes.

Ever seeking to maximize opportunities for trade, groups of Srimals and other Jain clans had to spread out and settle in different, often quite far-flung towns. Yet these groups formed a close nexus, maintaining intimate links in various ways, through marriage, common pilgrimages, mutual business, frequent visits to each other in search of new trading opportunities, constant exchange of news and, above all, a general mobility necessitated by the very nature of their profession. Banarasi himself was on the move most of his life. Changing political circumstances constantly created new centres of power and commerce. Older towns fell into disuse and decay, forcing Srimals and other Jains to look for new homes and new opportunities in new places. But all through this flux and commotion the community never lost its cohesion and solidarity. Its members created a little world of their own wherever they went, retaining their perennial ties with groups living elsewhere: geographically separated groups thus continued to live in the same cultural space.

Politically, India has rarely known the unity and continuity that we find in its culture. And its cultural continuity depended vitally on stable institutions like the community which always enjoyed a great degree of autarky. Muslim rulers, too, did not interfere with its workings, indifferent to it inasmuch as it did not impinge upon their own power and authority. Thus the community continued tenaciously as the preserver of cherished old ideals and ways of life.

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Banarasi's story is an invaluable witness to the pervasiveness of the community in the life of an individual. His community defined his manner of life as well as his interests, demarcating also the social arena within which he had meaningful human relations. The people he loved and befriended, those from whom he learnt or those he taught, his partners in business, those amidst whom or with whom he worked and those with whom he had dealings, were all, with few exceptions, people of his community. Even his enemies and opponents, people with whom he fought with any zeal or against whom he harboured any passionate resentment, were fellow-men belonging to his community. The social world beyond was, in comparison, shadowy, uncertain, even uncanny. It was a world he had to come to terms with, but which was outside the enclosed little universe to which he could respond with warmth, sensitivity and understanding. It tended often to shade into the senseless when it eluded his scheme of meaning and he could not quite fathom its workings. Twice during his lifetime, his community had to face severe and arbitrary persecution at the hands of the Mughal rulers. His fellow-clansmen and traders had to flee from Jaunpur with their lives, biding time till things returned to normal once again. Banarasi seems only half aware of the reasons for the sudden atrocities which were cruelly unleashed on his fellow merchants, nor did he really care to enquire. These were for him events as senseless as a natural calamity and to be borne as such with patience and fortitude.

The first persecution occurred when he was a young boy. His father was put into prison by the governor of Jaunpur along with other traders and businessmen of the town, who, as he says, were whipped and tortured till they lay half-dead. Banarasi is curiously vague about the reason for this cruel behaviour: the governor, he passively remarks, demanded 'something' which the tradesmen were not in a position to render. The governor withdrew the persecution as abruptly and irrationally as he had begun it and the traders were freed from imprisonment. But they were so terrified that they made

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haste to escape from Jaunpur. Banarasi's father fled with his family and found shelter with a magnanimous friend in a distant town. He was quick to recover and with a tenacity characteristic of his community, was soon able to rebuild his trade. Banarasi's comments on this episode are instructive. Not a word does he say in protest against the gross tyranny of his rulers; nor does it occur to him to raise the issues of fairness and political justice which the situation plainly called for. He speaks of the strange vagaries of fortune and preaches forbearance; a man, he says, should face the unpredictable vicissitudes of his circumstances with dispassionate equanimity.[1]

The second persecution took place during Jahangir's reign in A. D. 1617, when Banarasi had at last begun to gain some success in his business. The authorities suddenly turned upon his community, despotically hounding and torturing its members with cruel determination. Banarasi was himself a beleagured sufferer. He managed to escape with his life and remained in hiding for weeks, spending forty miserable days in a small abandoned jungle fortress. He complains bitterly of the atrocities his fellow–traders had to suffer, but does not seem to have felt any urge to enquire into the cause and justification for this inhuman torture. The suppression again ended as suddenly as it had begun. Banarasi returned home thankfully. He learned, however, that some merchants had still not been released. They were beaten mercilessly and dragged away as prisoners for reasons unknown. The action, he implies, was clearly arbitrary, but he takes a strangely neutral stand towards it, commenting that God alone could tell whether it was right or wrong. It seems that he considered it outside the pale of events to which moral categories of judgement could be applied. It was something about which he could do nothing and was therefore not worth discussing. It was an occurrence which left him baffled but not outraged, almost as though it were a tragedy caused by a natural and not a human agency.

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, Verses 127-130.

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All that was humanly meaningful or significant lay for him eminently in the life of his community. The realm outside presented an unintelligible web with which he had to come to terms, but towards which he felt uneasy and apathetic.

I was unaware of the *Ardhakathanaka* till two years ago, when a friend gave me a copy of Nathuram Premi's 1957 edition of the book with the comment that it was the first autobiography in Hindi written before modern times.

This was really intriguing. Today the influence of the West has made the writing of autobiography common enough, but Indian writings of the pre-modern period are devoid of personal accounts except for superficial notices, incidentally recorded, which give no more than a man's parentage, genealogy, social role, status and the like. But true autobiography in which a man attempts to lay bare his life, revealing himself through his actions, aspirations and strivings, is completely missing.

We have learnt to deplore this as a 'flaw' or 'void' in our culture. Consequently, some scholars have patiently scanned ancient Indian literature for signs and samples of autobiographical expressions. But even a minute search yields no more than a few fragments which hardly satisfy. Perhaps one of the best pieces of truly autobiographical expression is the early part of the *Harsacarita* (7th century A. D.), where the author Bana talks of his bereaved childhood, his student days and early youth when he wandered as an itinerant poet in the not very respectable and motley company of artist friends. Bana's account is engagingly candid, but it is too brief and fragmentary to qualify as autobiography. It is no more than a short prelude to the story of King Harsa, the poet's patron. Bana tells us how he met the

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king and why the king was at first a little wary of accepting the poet into his company. This occasions a glimpse into his youthful exploits which had earned him disrepute. Bana had no intention of writing an autobiography. The famed Hindi scholar and novelist, Hazari Prasad Dvivedi has used Bana's nebulous self-revelation as the nucleus for a fine autobiographical novel, the *Bana Bhatta ki Atmakatha*. But this is a distinctly modern move.

Another ancient segment to which attention is often drawn is a chapter in Bilhana's historical romance, the *Vikramankadeva-carita*, a work designed as a eulogy to the 11th century Caulukyan king Vikramanka, the poet's patron. At the end of his work, Bilhana, a Kashmirian who later migrated to the Indian mainland in search of fortune, describes his native town Pravarapura with idyllic nostalgia. He sings the praises of his family, renowned through generations for its learning, and speaks at length about his own education and versatile scholarship. He boasts of the laurels he had won at many kingly courts, vanquishing celebrated pandits throughout the country, before entering the service of Vikramanka-deva. He also speaks wistfully, though not quite convincingly, of his intention to give up the mad, hollow pursuits of the world and live as a recluse on the banks of the Ganges.

Segments such as these do not amount to more than pale shadows of what we today know as autobiography. And the fact that they are avidly pointed out and prized for their meagre autobiographical content only serves to accentuate the absence of autobiography in Indian literature.

Why did Indians choose not to write autobiographies ? This question, like its cognate, 'why did Indians not write history ?' is a complex question, almost metaphysical in its ramifications. It can perhaps never be answered satisfactorily. The causes why a particular culture shows little interest in a certain area of enquiry or self-expression remain largely elusive and inscrutable. Certainly, one can discover no inherent deficiency of intelligence,

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talent or ability which somehow incapacitated the ancient Indians from writing history or from expressing themselves in autobiography. Few would today subscribe to the once strongly-held belief that certain propensities or capacities are inborn in a particular race or people, while others just happen to lack them by nature.

There is also a widely-held view that Indians were deliberate anonymity-seekers. Cherishing such an ideal, they obviously could not have produced autobiography. The authors of the most characteristic expressions of Indian culture, it is pointed out, remain wilfully nameless or inhabit the obscure regions of myth. The *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas*, in other words works which virtually articulate the very spirit of Indian culture, have no manifest author; and the same is true of such quintessential products of art as the subtle, mellow murals of Ajanta, the monumental rock temple of Ellora, the triumphant trimurti Siva of Elephanta and other characteristic creations. No one knew or cared to know who created them. Little value was placed in India on the individual or his achievement. The culture plainly did not afford a milieu where autobiography could strike roots.

This, however, is a one-sided view. It can be shown that the so-called anonymity of Indian culture is a myth born of superficial understanding. A few illustrations can, I believe, reveal its ineptness.

Indian writers, for example, like writers everywhere, loved recognition. They were certainly no anonymity-seekers. They felt the universal need to proclaim their authorship and glory in it. Thus it was an established custom to announce the name of a dramatist in the prologue to his play. Many authors added to this a more personal address. The young Kalidasa, presenting his new play, the *Malavikagnimitram*, asks his audience to judge him without prejudice on the merits of his play and not deprecate him simply on the ground that his was a new production. There

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is an evident element of pride in his plea, "not all that is old is good, nor the new bad."

In the epilogue to the *Malatimadhavam*, the producer of the play (the sutradhara) introduces the playwright Bhavabhuti with a brief encomium extolling his learning and his learned ancestry, adding the poet's own celebrated interjection: "I grant that those who disdainfully scorn and reject my work are men of knowledge and understanding; but my effort is not directed towards them. Someday, somewhere, my writings will surely find a kindred soul who thinks and feels as I do: the world is vast and time has no end."[1] These wistful words evince an uncompromising spirit and a deep unyielding pride, yet there is an undertone of modesty in them which is missing from the epilogue of the poet's later and maturer play, the *Uttararamacaritam*. Here the poet is introduced as the 'creator whom the goddess of learning herself serves as a maid'.[2]

These words are perhaps not the poet's own. But similar or even more flamboyant boasts are not uncommon in other plays. Jayadeva, the author of *Prasannaraghavam*, known for his skill in logic, reassures his audience that the harsh discipline had not rendered him too rough for the gentle art of poetry and drama. He declares with confident pride that his pen is quite as rich in evocative grace as in logical rigour: "The rugged hand that wields a weapon with vigour becomes soft and tender when fondling a breast,"[3] he remarks, using an erotic image characteristic of his times. A much later poet, Kasipati, repeats the same sentiment, using a different, less prurient simile, in the play *Mukundanandabhana*. "My speech," he says, "is naturally graceful. And though it may appear as stark and severe in polemical argumentation, it reveals itself as tenderly soft and pliant in poetry : the

1 *Malatimadhavam*, Act I.

2 'yaṁ brahmāṇamiyaṁ devī vāgvaśyevānuvartate,' *Uttararamacaritam*, Act I.

3 *Prasannaraghavam*, Act I.

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very flowers which cause pain in loneliness are a source of joy in the company of the beloved."[1]

The practice of introducing oneself was not limited to playwrights. Writers of novels or romances—the ancient katha—were also expected to announce themselves. There is a dictum in Rudrata's famous manual on poetics and literature, the *Kavyalankara* (9th century A.D.), which instructs a poet that in writing a katha he should, after customary benedictions, introduce himself to the reader and also provide necessary information about his family and lineage.[2] This dictum, like others of its kind which found their way into literary manuals, aimed at translating into norms, practices already rooted in convention. There are, indeed, indications that by Rudrata's time the practice was already quite in vogue. *Lilavati*, a celebrated katha in Prakrit composed a little earlier than Rudrata's *Kavyalankara*, closely conforms to Rudrata's rule. Another author, Svayambhu, writing at about the same time, also follows this precept. He gives us a lively introduction to himself in his *Paumacariu*, an epic-like katha based on a Jain version of the Ramayana story. "I am tall and scrawny," he says, "and I have an ugly snub-nosed face with sparse, wide-apart teeth. I have had little training in the exacting art of poetry; yet this will not deter me from my ambitious enterprise. May my speech be subtle and elegant."[3]

Song writers too had a convention, continuing to this day, according to which a composer affixed his name at the end of his song as a kind of signature. Ancient music manuals carry a dictum to this effect.[4] Samples of songs dating as far back as the 8th

1 *Mukundanandabhana*, verse 7 (Nirnayasagar Press edition).

2 'saṅkṣepeṇa nijaṁ kulamabhidadhyātsvaṁ ca kartṛtayā,' *Kavyalankara*, 16, 20.

3 *Paumacariu*, verses 2 and 3 of the first chapter in the opening sandhi.

4 Śārṅgadeva, writing in the early years of the 13th century, says that a vāggeyakāra, a musician-composer, should include his name in the final stanza of his song. The convention much antedates Śārṅgadeva who was only reiterating it.

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century A. D. bear testimony to the antiquity of this practice. The caryagiti songs of the Tantrik Buddhist mystics, Sarahapada, Santipada, Bhusukapada, Luipada and others, written between the 8th and the 12th centuries A.D., contain the name of the composer as a stamp of authorship.[1] Like Kabir's songs, they sing of trans-human bliss, and yet like them they also bear the name of the man who created them.

Jayadeva, the celebrated author of the *Gitagovinda*, was both a poet and a song composer. The astapadi songs of his poem carry his name in the final stanza. Like another Jayadeva we have mentioned earlier, he was quite ostentatious in his pride. His *Gitagovinda* has the following self-composed oration to his song: "Connoisseurs will discover in my work rare skill in music, along-with a sure grasp of the profundities of Vaisnavism and of the subtle arts of love—all expressed in the most enchanting, sweetly-flowing verse."[2]

Poets could be as self-assertive and confident of their creative powers as dramatists or song writers. Dharmakirti proclaims the uniqueness of his talent with complete conviction: "I am without a second," he says, "no one has tread this path before me, nor do I see anyone following."[3] The most endearing boast is that of Vijjaka, a dark-complexioned southern poetess who writes: "Dandin (the famous critic) did not know me, or else he would never have described Sarasvati—the Muse of Poetry—as white."[4]

If the *Puranas* and works like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* cannot be assigned to tangible authors—though this view has been seriously questioned—the reason is not far to seek.

1 *Caryagitikosa*, ed. Prabodha Chandra Bagchi, Vishvabharati, Shantiniketan, 1956.

2 *Gitagovinda*, 12, 18; see also 1, 3 and 12, 21 of the edition published by the Sanskrit Academy, Osmania University, Hyderabad, 1969.

3 *Subhasitaratnakosa*, verse 32 of the 'Kavistutivrajyā'.

4 *Subhasitaratnabhandagara*, 2, 54.

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Works of this nature are intended to bear an almost canonic, superhuman authority : they serve as fountainheads of culture. Their authorship cannot be merely human or they would become fallible like all human utterances and their normative value would be greatly reduced. They are the supreme voice of a whole culture, not an individual.

Compared to literature, works of painting, the plastic arts and architecture are shrouded in greater anonymity. We do not know, for example, who created the Elephanta Siva or the paintings of Ajanta, but this is partly due to paucity of information surviving from the past. Vicissitudes of time have allowed fewer commemorative records from this field to survive. Moreover, scrutiny in this area has not yet been adequate enough. As research proceeds, more and more names and circumstantial details about painters, sculptors and architects are coming to light.

Sivaramamurti, in his *5000 Years of Indian Art*, records the names of certain sculptors from Mahoba, the Candella capital, known for their great artistic triumphs. The statuesque Mahoba Bodhisattva was carved by Citanaka, described as skilled in all the fine arts. His father, Satanas, was famed as a painter. Satanas' daughter-in-law, perhaps Citanaka's wife, was a sculptress in her own right, as an epigraph records. We have an image of Goddess Tara carved by her hand. At Khajuraho, the sculptor Sri Kana has proudly inscribed his name on a graceful flute-playing girl.[1] Unique, perhaps, is a record commemorating the master-sculptor Ranaka Sulapani, 'the crest-jewel of the guild of craftsmen from Varendra (in North Bengal)'. His masterly icon of Hari Hara—an image which fuses the two supreme gods, Siva and Visnu, into a single human figure—is lauded in a charming verse, which expresses the artist's sense of proud joy in his creation as well as a feeling of humility before the gods, through an ingenious fancy : "The

1 Mario Bussagli and Calembus Sivaramamurti, *5000 Years of Indian Art*, New York, p. 209.

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sculptor could not entirely succeed in fusing the two gods into a single identity," the verse says, "because Laxmi and Parvati, the consorts of Visnu and Siva, stood clinging to their husbands creating an obstacle : whom would they clasp with love, the goddesses apprehensively thought, if the two gods were to mingle their separate selves into one ?"[1]

These are by no means stray notices. In Karnataka, names of individual artists have been recorded since an early period. Many of them have been extolled for their skill in both architecture and sculpture. The more deft were commissioned to build temples in more than one place. One of the most prolific whose name has come down to us was a man named Malitamma.[2]

The great architect of Konarak, the sutradhara Sadasiva Samantarai Mahapatra, has probably signed his work in a portrait of himself and his wife which can still be seen on the magnificent structure. A unique manuscript incorporated in the pioneer study, *New Light on the Sun Temple of Konarak*, records all the names of the artists who had worked on that imposing project.[3]

Yet, compared to what we have in literature, celebrations of individual names in architecture and the fine arts are rare and lacking in vivid impact. Artists in this field were not treasured with the same fondness as poets, novelists and dramatists. They were mostly prized for their skill and craft, not the unique quality of their genius. Still, respect for creative talent and originality was not entirely missing in this area. A Tibetan

1 'yatrāliṅganabhagnakātarataya sthitvāntare kāntayordevībhyāṁ kathamapyabhinnatanutāyāḥ śilpe'ntarāyaḥ kṛtaḥ,' quoted in R. N. Misra, *Ancient Artists and Art Activity*, Simla, 1975, p. 60 fn. 1.
Misra's monograph will amply reward readers looking for records naming and celebrating individual artists of antiquity.

2 *Marg*, Volume XXXI, No. 1, 'In Praise of Hoysala Art', pp. 43–44.

3 Alice Boner, *New Light on the Sun Temple of Konarak*, published in the Chaukhamba Sanskrit Series, Varanasi, 1972 : see Introduction.

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author of the early 17th century, named Taranatha, has preserved for us certain names of Indian painters and sculptors who created new styles which later crystallised into regional schools : Bimbasara founded the central Indian school, Srigdhari, an artist from Maru, the western desert, was the originator of the western Indian school and Dhiman from Varendra in North Bengal established the Eastern school during the rule of the Pala kings Devapala and Dharmapala. Dhiman's son Bitpalo did not follow his father in the art, but favoured the central Indian style. Hasuraj introduced new techniques in Kashmir.[1]

Taranatha's account is late and brief, yet circumstantial enough to embody a genuine tradition among artists.

There is, admittedly, a big gap between an artist's desire to assert and perpetrate his identity and the writing of an autobiography. Yet the above examples do, I hope, show that autobiography in India was not something entirely unthinkable as it would have been if anonymity were a completely overpowering ideal. Indeed, though autobiography as such was unknown, the possibility of autobiography is dimly discernible.

The autobiographical mode of narration, for one, was quite well-known. Critics recognised the use of the first person as an effective way of presenting a story. We have spoken earlier of kathas: stories or novels. These formed a large body of literature with a long tradition. Story-telling in India has always been a much-loved art both at a popular and at a cultivated, sophisticated level. Styles of narration ranged from the simple and direct to the subtly refined and ornate. Plots, too, ranged wide, from the relatively realistic to the imaginatively fanciful.

Theorists had divided the large, varied genre of narrative literature into two main classes : the katha and the akhyayika.

1 Tāranātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, ch. 44 (entitled 'The History of Image Makers'), pp. 347–349 of the IIAS edition, Simla, 1970.

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Of particular interest to us is the class known as the akhyayika. According to the notable sixth-century definition of the critic Bhamaha, what distinguished it was that it was narrated in the first person, the protagonist himself relating his adventures. A considerable body of akhyayikas seem to have existed in the 7th century A. D., when the famous critic Dandin ridiculed Bhamaha's definition, questioning the appropriateness of a distinction made purely on the basis of using the first person instead of the third.[1]

Dandin's criticism seems quite in order if the use of the first person instead of the third was all that distinguished the akhyayika from the katha. But the moot question is : was a distinction in the genre made merely on this flimsy ground ? We get no answer from Bhamaha or Dandin whose comments seem to suggest that the ground really was superficial, amounting to no more than a difference in literary device. An earlier writer, the lexicographer Amara Simha, however, points at a deeper differentiation. Amara Simha's characterisation, being lexicographical, is extremely brief, though pointedly suggestive. Amara Simha defines the katha as a fanciful and imaginary tale, while the akhyayika, according to his description, had closer ties with everyday experience and reality.[2] He makes no mention of the grammatical person in which the narrative was to be told. His characterisation certainly points to a deeper ground for the distinction between the two classes of stories : the akhyayika was more firmly anchored in what we call realism, whereas the katha was more dreamlike. Bhamaha, who was the target of Dandin's criticism, also seems to have had this point in mind. His characterisation of akhyayika includes a phrase suggesting that the protagonist of these stories related his actual experiences.[3] It must be admitted, though, that Bhamaha is

1 'anyo vaktā svayaṁ veti kīdṛgvā bhedalakṣaṇam,' *Kavyadarsa*, 1, 2, 5.

2 'ākhyāyikā upalabdhārthā prabandhakalpanā kathā,' *Amarakoṣa*, 1, 'śabdavarga', 5-6.

3 'vṛttamākhyāyate yasyāṁ nāyakena svaceṣṭitam,' Bhāmaha, *Kavyalankara*, 1, 26.

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ambiguous and not quite articulate on this point. He is not a very satisfactory guide. And, unfortunately, hardly any descriptive material concerning the katha and akhyayika, besides that of Bhamaha and Amara Simha, survives from the earlier centuries, leaving us free to indulge in speculations and conjectures.

We would have been in a position to judge the matter more concretely had more akhyayikas from early times survived. But though kathas are available in plentiful, the only work classed as an akhyayika that has come down to us is Bana's *Harsacarita*, which, as we have already noted, also contains autobiographical material. Comparing it with *Kadambari*, Bana's other masterpiece, which is a celebrated katha, a distinction is obvious between the two and brings to mind Amara's rather than Bhamaha's description. The *Harsacarita*, despite excursions into romance and poetic fancy, is clearly designed to be anchored in reality : it is a biography of the poet's patron, King Harsa. The *Kadambari*, on the other hand, is manifestly a fairy-tale. But we note that the *Harsacarita*, even in its autobiographical section, is not narrated in the first person. Apparently Bhamaha had picked on a superficial and perhaps merely accidental feature of the akhyayika to characterize it.

We have only one surviving work which satisfies both Bhamaha's and Amara's conditions for the akhyayika. It is the *Dasakumaracarita* by Dandin himself. Dandin makes piquant use of the first person in relating the rakish, often picaresque adventures of ten young princes whose stories comprise this celebrated novel. Its narrative moves in a relatively realistic atmosphere. But, significantly, the *Dasakumaracarita* has not been placed in either of the traditional categories of the katha or the akhyayika and remains a class by itself.

We do not know if Bana's akhyayika was the first of its kind to include autobiographical detail, incorporated fittingly in a work with a realistic tenor. However, it did seem to have set a trend.

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Rudrata certainly had the *Harsacarita* before him as a model in stipulating that the author of an akhyayika should insert an account of himself and his family in his story.[1] We do not, however, know the later history of the trend for no akhyayika after Bana survives.

Bana was a much admired and imitated author. Yet it is significant that though numerous kathas written after Bana have come down to us—their authors doing their best to equal or excel Bana's ornate, sophisticated style—no akhyayika other than the *Harsacarita* is to be found in the whole of available Sanskrit literature. Even citations of other akhyayikas are not to be found in the huge corpus of later literary manuals, which, in giving examples of the akhyayika, name only the *Harsacarita*. I have been able to discover the name of only one other akhyayika, the *Madhavika*, noted by king Bhoja of the early 11th century in his voluminous *Srngaraprakasa*.[2]

But Bana did have one significant follower in writing autobiography: Dandin. Writing some decades after Bana, Dandin wrote another novel besides the unconventional *Dasakumaracarita*, namely the *Avantisundarikatha*. This work was long thought lost but is now available in a slightly mutilated form.[3] Though a katha, it begins with an account of Dandin and his ancestors. The author gives us a short but lively glimpse into his personal history, which has not quite attracted the attention it deserves. Dandin's grandfather, he tells us, ran away from home at the young age of twenty. He found a patron in the king of Kanci through the good offices of his friend, the renowned poet Bharavi, and attached himself to

1 'nijavaṁśaṁ svaṁ cāsyāmabhidadhyāt, *Kavyalankara*, 16, 26.

2 *Srngaraprakasa*, ch. 11 (Volume II, p. 469 of the Jossyer edition, Mysore, 1963).

3 *Avantisundarikatha*, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series, Trivandrum, 1954. A fragment of the work was published in 1924 by Sri Ramkrishna Kavi. This consisted of only the first few pages. The 1954 edition runs into 246 pages of print and is based on a better, more complete manuscript. It is yet somewhat defective and lacuna-ridden.

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his court. Born in Kanci, Dandin, like Bana, lost his father while he was still an adolescent. Political tragedy followed in the wake of family bereavement. Enemy forces overran Kanci, bringing with them all the evils of a ruthless war. In a passage rare in Sanskrit literature, Dandin speaks of the pitiless horrors that followed: the remorseless pillage and destruction of food-grains, the rape of women and the total disruption of all institutions of learning, culture and charity. Hearth fires, he says, signs of normal family life, were extinguished and people fled to safer lands. Dandin too was forced to leave Kanci for other parts of the country to complete his education.[1]

Like Bana, Dandin speaks of himself in the third person. Interestingly, Banarasi does the same. His story is told as the tale of 'Banarasi'. We do not know if this is just a remarkable coincidence or there is a deeper reason behind it. Dandin would perhaps have dismissed the matter as a superficial detail of no consequence. We are unable to do more.

After Dandin, the dim yet pregnant vestiges of autobiographical expression in Sanskrit literature dwindle away into insignificance, becoming frigid, impersonal notices. Following the prestigious instructions of manuals and critics such as Rudrata, later katha–writers have included some traces of personal history in their works. But none have the liveliness and the promise of Bana and Dandin. They are, for the most part, entirely inert and lack–lustre.

After long centuries almost totally devoid of meaningful autobiographical expression, the emergence of the *Ardhakathanaka*, a full–fledged autobiography, therefore, certainly occasions surprise. Banarasi's own reason for writing it is startlingly simple: it

1 *Ibid.*, pp. 10–12.

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occurred to him, he says, that he should narrate the events of his own life. And he did. He mentions no examples or models which might have influenced him in his endeavour. He was a highly educated man, well-read in many subjects. In fact, he gives us a fairly exhaustive list of the books he had studied. None even distantly approach the autobiography. Though he had learnt Sanskrit, he did not seem to have read many literary works in the language and remained unfamiliar with Bana, Dandin and others who might have provided him with an example, however embryonic. His taste in literature appears to have been confined to poems and ballads in Hindi. This whole vernacular literature was almost completely devoid of autobiographical interest and could not have provided him with the impulse for his unusual attempt. His autobiography is manifestly an isolated expression which cannot be forced into any traditional literary genre or established mode of expression.

But what, one might pertinently ask, of a Persian influence ? The Mughal regime under which Banarasi wrote was marked by a strong influence of Arabic-Persian culture. Banarasi's impulse towards writing an autobiography could quite imaginably have had its source in the Arabic-Persian tradition where such expressions are by no means rare. Babur, the founder of the Mughal empire, was himself an avid memoir-writer. He probably derived his inspiration from his forefathers, Timur and Changez, who had also written autobiographical accounts. Babur's revealing memoirs were written as journals, which he assiduously maintained even in the heat of battle. The emperor Jahangir, during whose reign Banarasi spent his youth in Agra, was again a devoted journal writer.[1] Indeed, Persian literature, with its keen interest in history, abounds in autobiographical material. Some of the best Persian historians writing in India have also narrated the history of their own careers and experiences with sensitivity and appealing candour. The names of Barni, Ibn Batuta and Badayuni come readily to mind.

1 His journal is named the *Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri.*

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Yet Banarasi's education, though considerable, followed an entirely traditional, indigenous course. He studied from scholars trained purely in the Indian system of learning. He grew up in a town which had been a major centre of Arabic and Persian education since the 14th century, yet he never showed any curiosity towards such learning. Indeed, he hardly seems to have been aware of this aspect of the town's life. There is a passage in his autobiography where he describes the sights of Jaunpur. He is strangely silent about its renowned madarsas, maktabs and mosques—Islamic institutions of learning—in fact, even the Muslim population. This could reasonably be dismissed as no more than a curious, inconsequential omission.[1] But it does show an attitude of unconcern towards Persian learning and culture.

It would be natural to presume that a man pursuing learning under a regime which fostered Arabic and Persian letters would imbibe new values almost as a matter of course. The new culture would be part of the very air he breathed, as it were. It would be wrong, however, to make such a presumption in Banarasi's case. We are lured by our more recent British experience to picture the dissemination of Persian learning in India on the lines of the more recent spread of Western education in the country. Such a presumption is belied by facts. We have only to note that unlike Western learning, Persian learning left no deep impression upon vernacular literature which continued to be rooted in age-old traditions and values. What it imbibed from the new culture remained superficial and peripheral. Persian learning remained the preserve of a few, and even if a certain awareness of the new cultural ethos was felt at all levels of the population, such aspects of Persian learning as the writing of history and autobiography remained largely an esoteric area.

The pivotal reason was the prevailing system of education. The Muslims, unlike the British, did not feel impelled by an educa-

1 See our notes on *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 24–37.

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ting mission. They allowed the indigenous system to continue with vigour. As a result, education under Muslim rule was grounded on a basic duality. Two different streams, the Arabic-Persian and the indigenous Indian, flowed side by side, each keeping its discrete identity and character. Proximity certainly resulted in cross–influences. But the impact of the new learning never became even faintly as overpowering as in British times.

More and more Hindus were encouraged to study Persian during Akbar's time, and this liberal emperor also widened the scope of the prevalent curriculum by laying greater emphasis on empirical disciplines, including the study of public affairs and history.[1] Subsequent Mughal kings did their best to keep up this trend, though, perhaps, not with the same enthusiasm. The new trend, however, seems to have created no more than a minor dent in the massive segregation prevailing in the educational system. Akbar had, in his own catholic way, put the stamp of state recognition on the dual system by patronising both. While he established Persian madarsas with a marked accent on disciplines with a practical orientation, he also established Sanskrit pathsalas where teaching followed old, traditional lines. Later emperors evidently did not disturb this arrangement. They were benefactors to many Sanskrit pandits besides Arabic and Persian ulama. This attitude aided the duality to persist.

Many who pursued one course of education never came in touch with the other. Banarasi was among these. Even when opportunity presented itself, he felt no attraction towards Persian learning. He was, for a time, in fairly close contact with the learned Mughal Governor of Allahabad, a nobleman called the younger Qilij Khan, who served under Jahangir. Qilij Khan studied Hindi versification and poetic usage with Banarasi. But the curiosity to learn was apparently one–sided; no reciprocal interest was shown by Banarasi in Persian and its poetry, although he was a practising poet all his life, and a desire to know something

1 S. M. Jaffar, *Education in Muslim India*, p. 21.

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of Persian poetry may well have been expected of him. His indifference in an area which to him remained of lifelong interest makes it all the more unlikely that he might have been attracted towards more specialised Persian disciplines such as history or the allied field of autobiography.

His total ignorance of histories written in Persian is revealed pointedly in two of his sallies into the past : one, when he speaks of the glories of his home town Jaunpur, outlining the history of its brilliant Sharqui sultans, and secondly, somewhat earlier, in a reference to the early days of Mughal rule.[1] These passages evince an utterly naive and untutored attitude towards history which any acquaintance with sophisticated Persian historians would have made him seriously question.

A closer look at his education, both at an early primary level and at the later stage of higher learning, will perhaps help to project our remarks more vividly. As in much else, his community played a key role in Banarasi's education. Like his father before him, he was sent at the age of eight to a traditional Indian pathsala which was run by a single pedagogue, who imparted to his charges skill in reading, writing, arithmetic and accountancy. The pathsala was clearly meant for boys from business families and was supported by Banarasi's clan, perhaps in association with sister business communities. Banarasi took no more than a year to acquire this primary education. For most of Banarasi's comrades this must have been all the formal learning they ever acquired throughout their life. This early training was considered to be sufficient preparation for the family business which awaited them and to which they were recruited at a much earlier age than boys today. Banarasi's father was already looking for an opening at twelve.

But Banarasi was different. At fourteen he discovered a passion for further learning—along with sex—and apprenticed

1 For details see our notes on *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 15–22 and 24–37.

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himself to a learned teacher named Devadutt, a scholar evidently maintained in some manner by the Jain community of Jaunpur. Banarasi give us a list of the texts he studied with Devadutt. These range over widely different disciplines: erotics, astronomy, mathematics, rhetorics and also lexical works which were important for would be poets: Banarasi too had ambitions in that direction.

Banarasi may have been atypical for his community, but he was certainly not unique in manifesting, an interest in higher Studies. Many of his merchant friends, as we shall see later, were, like him, men of education with a similar penchant for poetry. Evidently, teachers like Devadutt were quite an institution. The Jain business clan, like other business-folk, considered too much learning profitless—Banarasi was severely admonished for his love of it—but like all Indians they revered learning as a superior cultural value and thought it meritorious to help the learned. They thus maintained men like Devadutt, whose very presence, however must have been an impetus towards learning for the more curious young boys of the community such as Banarasi. The later Terapanth sect, which grew up with Banarasi's ideals, cherished learning more actively and propagated it vigorously among the young. A man named Raimalla Brahmachari, who visited Jaipur in A. D. 1764, reports that the Terapanthis had employed a learned brahman for imparting higher learning to the young men of the community. This teacher, who was named Mahendra, taught logic, grammar and mathematics to a group of thirty students.[1] Raimalla also reports of having met in Agra two learned businessmen who were renowned for their knowledge of grammar and Jain religious texts; they gave regular public discourses on these subjects.[2]

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1 *Indradhvajavidhanamahotsava-patrika*, quoted as Appendix I in Bharilla, *Pandit Todarmal: Vyaktitva aur Kartrtva*, Jaipur, p. 344.

See also *Jivan Patrika* by Raimalla, quoted in the same Appendix, p. 336. Raimalla here reports that a group of fifty to hundred students of the Terapanth community were engaged in studying subjects such as grammar, metrics, poetics and the like under expert guidance. Evidently, more than one teacher had been employed.

2 Raimalla, *Jivan Patrika*, op. cit., p. 334.

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After completing his studies with Devadutt, Banarasi was groomed by a Jain monk named Bhanuchandra who belonged to the Kharataragaccha sect of Svetambara Jains. This was the sect of monks to which Banarasi's own clan and family owed allegiance. Scholarship was an integral part of the discipline of most Jain monks and the Kharataragaccha was a leading sect in this respect. Many learned monks of this sect had attracted the attention and admiration of the emperor himself, the ever-curious Akbar.

Jain monks were effective disseminators of learning, since constant travel was a necessary part of their ascetic discipline. They wandered on foot from one habitat to another, halting for a long duration only during the four months of the rainy season, when they usually sojourned in an important town, as Bhanuchandra did in Jaunpur. The monks generally moved within a territory where they could, before nightfall, arrive at a village or town where householders of their sect lived. The followers of every sect made special arrangements for lodging their monks with due care, tending to their stringent needs with great devotion. Every town with any sizeable Jain population had abodes for monks, called upasrayas, where wandering monks could spend their days of rest. When monks were in town, householders flocked to them to hear their discourses and be inspired by their world–renouncing ideal and practice. Within any Jain community, the self-denying monks and the worldly householders complemented each other in various ways. The monks, who were generally sons of the laity, followed a rigorous ascetic code. Yet, they did not live like lone hermits away from the dwellings of men, but right in the midst of their laity. Their ceaseless wanderings carried them from one group of Jain families in one village or town to another. They never strayed too far away from their devotees because their needs, though sparse, were quite special; they required a devoted laity to look after them. And, in turn, they acted as spiritual guides for their followers, living beacons of a cherished ancient goal. They also served as vehicles for disseminating learning among the more inquisitive of their followers. The tradition of learning was old

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among them. The core of their curriculum was, of course, the Jain canon and related doctrinal texts, but they also received a sound, general education in many traditional branches of learning as basic background knowledge. Many Jain monks have consequently written excellent works on subjects such as grammar, logic, poetics, dramatics, mathematics, music and the like. It was not uncommon for Jains in Banarasi's days to employ learned Hindu brahmans to teach the more promising of their monks special courses in subjects like grammar and logic. The practice, we are told, is still followed by some sects. Yasovijaya, a younger contemporary of Banarasi and later a bitter opponent of his heterodox ideas, was sent to Agra as a young monk in order to master the intricacies of nyaya (logic) from such a pandit.[1] It is quite imaginable that curious young Jains, other than monks, also benefitted from their presence.

With Bhanuchandra, Banarasi made a special study of Sanskrit grammar—for Sanskrit was the traditional medium of learning—as well as Jain scriptural texts, pertaining especially to rituals and ordained observances.

His entire education thus followed on wholly Indian and specifically Jain lines, being sponsored directly or indirectly by his community. It can be presumed that he did not come in touch with anything like the autobiography he was later to write.

Despite the absence of a concrete model or a tangible influence, Banarasi's effort at self-revelation is remarkably authentic and candid.

Only on two occasions does his unusually fresh self-portrayal and conspicuous candour fail him. One was an unmentionable 'sin' he had committed while living in a small village where he

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, Introduction, p. 41–42.

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had taken refuge from the deadly plague then rampant in the city of Agra. He recoils perceptibly from the thought of revealing what he had done and frankly tells us that he will just not speak on the subject. Success in business came to Banarasi late in life, after years of dismal failure. We find him quite garrulous on the subject of his losses, but he quite unexpectedly tightens his lips when it comes to speaking of how he made his gains, hiding behind a quotation from ancient wisdom literature. The dictum he quotes gives a list of nine unutterables concerning oneself, matters such as age, sexual affairs and the like, including one's riches.

Fortunately, Banarasi followed this advice only partially, or else there would have been no *Ardhakathanaka*. He begins with a promise to unveil all, and seems indeed to have felt uncomfortable at having to hold something back. At the end of his story he says: "Few are willing to speak of their misdeeds, even small once, yet I have hidden but little." He meant this obviously as an excuse for having concealed certain facts.

His reticences suggest an important question: whom was he addressing ? For if in an otherwise frank narration he is wilfully silent on certain matters, the aim, obviously, was to keep them secret from those he knew would form his audience. And he must have had living, contemporary people in mind, for it is from these that one wishes to hide things. Banarasi himself gives us many hints concerning who they were. He had in mind some friends whom he greets at the very beginning of the story, seeking their attention.[1] At the end again, he comments that he is confident his friends will read his story and listen to it with fond interest though evil-minded fault-finders might only seek to ridicule it.[2]

Banarasi made many friends during an eventful life. He had to spend years in Agra and other towns away from his family, repeatedly facing frustrations in business. He learned to depend a great

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verse 7.

2 *Ibid*, verse 674.

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deal on friends both for companionship and partnership in trade. Most of his friends, as could be expected, were men of his clan and community. And as with all of us, he made new friends with a change in interests or pursuits and the vicissitudes of his circumstances, some friends remaining more constant than others. During the final period of his life, when he wrote his autobiography, his closest companions were friends who shared with him certain heterodox religious views. In fact, at this stage of his life he was emerging as the leader of a new religious group called Adhyatma, whose members were rebellious free-thinkers protesting against the tyranny and hollowness of overformalism in their orthodox faith. Banarasi regularly met friends belonging to this group in order to discuss matters of common spiritual interest. He names five friends of this brotherhood as being particularly close to him.

Curiously, Banarasi does not mention them in the *Ardhakathanaka*, where, indeed, he speaks of his association with Adhyatma quite cursorily, only in passing as it were. But, fortunately, we know something about them from his other celebrated work, the *Samayasaranataka*. He names them in the epilogue to this tract, which is a mature and ambitious dectrinal poem on Jain spiritual thought, written in Agra just a few years before the *Ardhakathanaka*.[1] This work itself often formed the topic of conversation among Banarasi's friends. Banarasi's five close companions were, like him, all Jain businessmen except perhaps one, Pandit Rupchands, who may have been a professional scholar. They shared Banarasi's talents as well as his spiritual interests. In Banarasi's own words: "Sometimes they would listen to the *Samayasaranataka* with relish or discuss matters of Jain doctrine from other important texts, and on other occasions they would speak in poetic, metaphoric language of the inmost spiritual experience."[2] Evidently, Banarasi's friends were poets like him. And, in fact, a few poetical compositions by some of them have

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 638–639.

2 *Samayasaranataka*, epilogue, verses 26–30.

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come down to us. These show a fair skill in the art and indicate that Banarasi's friends were men of education and cultivation, deeply interested in the spiritual life, apart from being, like him, men of affairs. One of them, Kanwarpal, was very fond of reading and maintained a library, part of which has survived in manuscript collections. His catholic taste and liberal tenor of mind is reflected in the poems he had commissioned to be copied for his personal reading. Expectedly, these contain verses by his friends Banarasi and Rupchand, but they also contain verses by non-Jain poets like Gyandas, Surdas and Kabir. Contemporary sources tell us that after Banarasi's death, Kanwarpal became the leader of the Adhyatma group hitherto led by Banarasi.

Kanwarpal was himself an occasional writer of verses on spiritual themes. In a short poem called the *Samkitbatisi* he gives us a few autobiographical details about himself. His full name was Kanwarpal Choradia and he belonged to the Oswal clan of Jain merchants.

Kanwarpal was a nephew of Dharamdas, Banarasi's partner in business during his younger days in Agra. Dharamdas' two elder brothers, Jasu and Amarsi[1] were rich, established jewellers of Agra when he set up business with Banarasi. Their partnership did not last for more than two years, and the two parted on a somewhat unfriendly note. During the years of his business association with Banarasi, Dharamdas was a spoilt young man, given to undesirable addictions.[2] In later life, he turned religious and as a mature man befriended Banarasi once again: his name figures in the intimate group of five named in the *Samayasaranataka*. We have a short didactic poem by Dharamdas with an unusual rhyme–scheme and metre. Banarasi too has a poem in

1 According to another reading of the text, Dharamdas was a son of Jasu. See *Ardhakathanaka*, p. 103. Banarasi says that Dharamdas came originally from Delhi. His family must have migrated to Agra, the capital, for more lucrative business.

2 *Ardhakathanaka*, verse 353.

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the same rare pattern. The two had, apparently, tried their hand at the challenging new form together.

Banarasi and his five friends formed the core of the Adhyatma group in Agra. He was at the head of this assemblage which he calls the Adhyatma Saili. The members of this emergent religious body, which was gradually acquiring a considerable following, styled themselves as 'gyatas': 'those who know'.

Curiously, nowhere does Banarasi speak of himself as the leader of these gyatas. He does tell us that he was an Adhyatmi—at the very end of the *Ardhakathanaka*[1]—but gives us no details concerning what he meant by this. In the absence of other sources of information, his stray reference could have been misleading or ambiguous, for 'adhyatmi' can be understood in a general sense as meaning a man with spiritual inclinations. Indeed, this is the sense of the word that would occur to one more readily and naturally. Banarasi chooses not to clarify his usage, which remains all the more uncertain because he has nothing to say of Adhyatma as a religious group in his autobiography, in spite of his own important role in it. One may be inclined to think that he was being modest. But this seems a feeble and inadequate reason for his silence on a major aspect of his life, particularly in a work where the very purpose was to relate his life-story. One would rather have expected him to be more than usually eloquent on this subject. The reason for his silence, we think, can only be understood if we take into account the audience he had in mind. He was addressing his autobiography to his Adhyatma friends, more particularly, perhaps, his five close companions. These, he knew, were only too familiar with the nature of his association with Adhyatma. He, therefore, felt no need to dilate on this aspect of his life in relating to them his life-story.

One leitmotiv runs like a strong undercurrent throughout the *Ardhakathanaka*: Banarasi's intense involvement with religion.

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verse 671.

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Though he reacted differently to it at different stages of his life, the authenticity of his involvement never wavered. For twelve years of his life before he wrote his autobiography, he had passed through a long and tortuous period of spiritual conflict. His study of certain Jain mystic tracts and the discussions be held with friends on Jain doctrines concerning the deepest religious life, convinced him that the truth of the spirit, the knowledge of which leads to liberation, lies beyond all forms, rituals and ordained, conventional practices. He had a staunch faith in the stringent observances decreed by his religion, but as he became convinced of their hollowness, he began to neglect them, even to the extent of displaying rank disrespect and disdain tawards them. He pondered deeply and constantly on the nature of mystic truth and his sense of the emptiness and meaninglessness of all rituals and ordained forms of religion grew with the year. But, as he confesses, he had yet no inkling of the inner truth. He felt he had entered a dark night of the soul and was lost in a bleak, hollow void between extraneous forms and commands of religion, which he had disgustedly rejected, and the formless inner spirit which completely eluded his grasp. Using vulgar language out of a sense of revulsion with himself, he says that he felt 'like a camel's fart floating in the barren void between the earth and heaven', a vile thing belonging nowhere.

In his contempt for all formal expressions of religion, he had begun to scoff even at the ways of saints and men of the spirit. In the company of some sacrilegious friends, he was wont to make indecent fun of even the highest ascetic and mystic life. The knowledge of his scandalous behaviour spread quickly, earning him considerable disrepute among the Jains of Agra.[1] He became known as a fickle, hollow man of no substance.

Later he came to realize that rituals too had their place in the spiritual life, that they were stepping-stones on the way to the formless spirit, and he regretted his earlier follies. He had by now become the

2 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 608–610.

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leader of the Adhyatma group. His gyata companions were mostly old friends and acquaintances, people of good standing in the Jain community. They certainly knew of Banarasi's profanities. But they must have known through distorting rumours and vicious gossip. Banarasi, in relating his story, seems to have been moved by a desire to tell them in his own words the story of what really happened and why: he wanted to tell them of the inner compulsion which had incited him in his actions, the schism in his soul, the turmoil that was driving him; and to impress upon them that in spite of all he did, he always retained a basic honesty of purpose. He was aiming, perhaps, at exonerating himself from wild unfounded charges, or, at least, gaining the sympathetic understanding of friends through frank confession, which has been a long-accepted mode of self-purification among the Jains.

That Banarasi was writing for an immediate circle of friends is also indicated otherwise. He assumes in his readers a quick, commonplace familiarity with certain personages (such as Tarachand Mothiya and Sabal Singh) who were obviously prominent men of his community in Agra. He takes them as so well known to his readers that he does not even think of introducing them or clarifying the nature of their relation with certain other persons who also figure prominently in his story. The modern reader is left puzzled, for though these men may have been influential people in their day within the closed circle of their community, they were entirely unknown to others: history knows nothing of them. Had Banarasi been writing for a wider, more general public, he would have taken care to properly introduce them before talking of them.

Banarasi, we have suggested above, was motivated to write an autobiography by a desire to justify himself to his friends. The reader might feel here that the drift of our argument is not quite in consonance with some of our earlier statements. The *Ardhakathanaka*, we had said, was a unique production. To suggest an explanation for why it was written, tends to place it within a

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general pattern, and the explanation we have given indeed makes it an ordinary, commonplace affair: what, after all, is unique about justifying oneself to one's friends ?

The truth, perhaps, is that he was not consciously trying to justify himself, and we on our part cannot assert a firm grasp of his motive with any great assurance. Unlike Gandhi, Banarasi does not avowedly set out to reveal a persistent spiritual aspiration as the moving force of his life. And even if he did wish to do so, this was hardly reason enough for him to write an autobiography. For if his purpose in writing it was to make his friends see his waywardness in the right perspective and awaken in them a genuine understanding of himself, he could have done this with greater eloquence and effect in personal conversations. And this, we can well imagine, he must have done. His need for self-justification or self–revelation did not really call for an autobiography, especially one the scope of which extends far beyond the purposes of vindicating past follies. Certainly, people have for centuries, even in India, tried to win the sympathy of their friends for their actions without having to write an autobiography. The motive of arousing a better understanding of oneself need hardly have been a compelling reason for Banarasi to set his life-story down on paper. The fact that he chose to address his friends through a written autobiography remains, in the last analysis, a contingent event: it is difficult to securely connect it with either a tractable personal motive or a tangible cultural tradition.

The theme of a spiritual quest becomes unmistakably dominant in Banarasi's story as it approaches its end. Before concluding, Banarasi even claims that he had reached his goal. "I achieved true vision and saw God as he is," he reports in verse 638. It is difficult to say if this claim was true and whether he made it with serious intent. The reader may tend to be sceptical, since almost in

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the very next breath he speaks of an ordinary mundane frustration: his life, he laments, was barren because he had no living children. He felt in his childless world like a dead, lifeless 'stump'—a sentiment hardly to be expected from a man who claims to have reached ultimate fulfillment. Later, again, when he good-humouredly gives us an inventory of his faults and merits, he reveals himself as a pleasant, amiable soul, with many winning qualities, but hardly a man of the spirit, a mystic. He had the impulses and failings of an ordinary human—though he was uncommonly conscious of them—but we miss in him the extraordinary intensity, the fearless inner mettle and equanimity of a saint.

Perhaps what he did succeed in achieving was an intellectual fulfillment. His study of the *Gommatasara*, an eleventh century classic on Jain doctrine, revealed to him the notion of gunasthanas, a concept which provided for him many key answers to his spiritual questionings and conflicts. The idea which lies behind the notion of gunasthanas is common to all Indian spiritual thought and has parallels in Hinduism as well as Buddhism. It is based on the belief that spiritual growth is a journey with many stages, and at every stage the appropriateness of a man's morals, conduct and practice is relative to the stage he is in.

In the notion of gunasthanas Banarasi discovered a satisfactory justification and rationale for rituals and observances decreed by his religion: these now fell into place as meaningful parts of a large spiritual scheme; they were useful at the lower stages of spiritual growth as preliminary steps leading to the goal, after which they could be discarded. Therefore, although insignificant in an ultimate sense, they yet helped a man by disciplining his wanton, aberrant appetites and putting him on to the right mystic path. Banarasi's discovery of the doctrine of gunasthanas put to rest the gnawing sense of conflict and dichotomy he felt between the formlessness of the spirit and the Strictly enjoined forms of religious observances, conduct and beliefs.

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Banarasi was not alone in being troubled by this conflict. Many of his fellow Jain merchants also felt it deeply. Repelled by the prevalent dominance of the letter over the spirit in their religion, these men had begun to harbour rebellious thoughts. Consequently, they felt attracted towards protestant groups such as the Adhyatma and were gradually drawn into its fold.

Banarasi's role in the history of Adhyatma was crucial. With him, what had been a nebulous movement became a potent religious force. It was only with him that the orthodox sectarians began to consider Adhyatma a serious threat to established religion and exhorted the faithful to beware of it. A considerable body of denunciatory and polemical literature was produced by the orthodox to combat the influence of Adhyatma. The whole of this literature postdates Banarasi. The most ambitious and seriously argued work of this class is a lengthy diatribe named *Yuktiprabodha* written by a Svetambara monk, Meghavijaya, who has significantly subtitled the work *Varanasiya Mata Khandanam*, literally, 'A Confutation of Banarasi's Views'. Meghavijaya wrote within a few decades of Banarasi's death and names Banarasi as the propagator of the Adhyatma movement. All subsequent writers on the subject follow suit. In fact, Banarasi has been identified as the moving spirit behind Adhyatma, and named as its originator and founder both by the later followers of the movement as well as its opponents. It would be interesting therefore to focus attention on this group and its history, and unfold Banarasi's connection with it, especially since he himself thought it unnecessary to say anything about the matter. Our account might help to supplement Banarasi's story in an area where he left it incomplete.

Though in later times it became inextricably linked with the name of Banarasi, he was not the progenitor of the Adhyatma movement. Had he been the founder of the movement, raising the edifice from scratch as it were, he perhaps would have told us more about his role in it. But, in truth, Adhyatma was already a movement of some standing when he first came to know of it as a

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young boy of twelve. He had, he tells us, spent at this age a few happy months in the house of Bhagvatidas at Fatehpur. Bhagvati's father, Basu Sah, he reports, was an 'Adhyatama-jan' a man well-known for his Adhyatma, or, in other words, a celebrated Adhyatmi. Banarasi does not tell us how deep his acquaintance was with this movement at this early stage of his life or whether it left any lasting impact on his mind. It appears, though, from the casual manner in which he recalls this event, that he found it significant only in retrospect after he had become a staunch Adhyatmi himself in later years.

Like Kanwarpal, who became the leader of the Adhyatma group after Banarasi, Basu Sah was a Jain belonging to the Oswal community of merchants.

Fatehpur was not the only centre where Adhyatma had made a headway before Banarasi. Dr. Vasudev Sharan Agrawal has spoken of an early Adhyatma group in Banaras. This was led by no less a personage than Govardhandas, a son of Raja Todarmal, Akbar's famous revenue minister celebrated also for his military exploits.[1] Todarmal died in A.D. 1589. We do not know much about the career of his son Govardhandas. But his group perhaps antedated Banarasi's leadership of the movement by a few decades. Banarasi never seems to have come in contact with Govardhandas and makes no mention of him or his group.

His really formative contact with Adhyatma occurred in A.D. 1623 when he was 37 years old. This was the time when he met an Adhyatmi named Arathmal Dhor in Khairabad, where he was sojourning for his third marriage. He engaged in long discussions with Arathmal on matters of common religious and spiritual interests, and he returned to Agra a transformed man.[2] Like most Jains of his day he had an implicit faith in rituals, observances,

1 Agrawal, V.S., 'Madhyakālīn Nagaron kā Sānskritik Adhyayan,' an essay published in *Jain Sandesa*, June 1957.

2 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 592-595.

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dogmas and the many traditional insignia of the sect to which he and his clan owed allegiance. He also did his best to translate this faith into practice. But Arathmal aroused in him profound doubts concerning the extraneous forms which had come to be associated with religion: dogmas, decrees, customs, observances, symbols, gestures and the like, and his erstwhile faith was completely shaken. He was now ripe for rebellion and in a receptive mood for heterodox ways of thinking such as those voiced by Adhyatma.

We do not, however, know at what time he became a full-fledged Adhyatmi. He himself tells us nothing; thinking, perhaps, that his readers already knew. But for us the matter presents a problem. Let us begin by examining two interesting dates noted by his later opponents. Meghavijaya, denouncing Adhyatma in his *Yuktiprabodha*, notes that this heretical movement originated with Banarasi in Vikram 1680, that is, A.D. 1623.[1] Writing much later in A.D. 1769, Bakhatram, in his *Mithyatvakhandananataka*, which is a Digambara diatribe against Adhyatma, gives a different date for the founding of Adhyatma: Vikram 1683 or A.D. 1626.[2]

Both these dates are patently incorrect as dates for the year in which the Adhyatma movement was born. The movement, we have observed, antedated Banarasi. These dates, however, do significantly mark two relevant events in Banarasi's life. The year 1623 A.D. noted by Meghavijaya was the year in which Banarasi met Arathmal Dhor. This encounter precipitated in him thoughts that swayed him towards Adhyatma. It proved, as he himself confesses, a turning point in his life. Thenceforth he was a rebel against established religion. But the moot question is, did he become a participant in the movement that very year ? It seems more reasonable to imagine that he remained for some time in a chaotic, imperspicuous state, a state of confused and perplexed

1 *Yuktiprabodha*, verse 18.

2 *Mithyatvakhandananataka*, verse 20.

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scepticism towards all forms of religion whether conventional or unconventional, before feeling any definite, positive inclination towards any specific movement.

Bakhatram wrote of the Adhyatma movement in the 18th century in Jaipur, where he lived. The movement by then had given rise to Terapanth. The Terapanth was a movement avowedly inspired by Adhyatma, but it was also in some ways an independent growth. Bakhatram names its founder as Amar Singh Godika, a merchant who lived in Sanganer, an old town close to Jaipur. Like Banarasi, Amar Singh had begun to question and harbour doubts about many conventional, formal practices of his orthodox Digambara faith and was forced by the incensed faithful to break away from it in A.D. 1626. There are some grounds for us to surmise that he might have been influenced by Banarasi in his break from the established religion: Banarasi had visited Sanganer at about the time when Amar Singh is reported to have broken out in defiant and open rebellion against his parent faith.

Banarasi's rebellious, iconoclastic mood, he tells us, lasted for twelve years, from A. D. 1623 to 1635. These years do not seem to have been otherwise eventful. All he has to report is a bare list of some routine events. Of these he considers worthy of mention two journeys he had made to attend weddings in Rajasthan, one of which was to Sanganer.[1] He does not give us the year of this visit, nor does he speak of any interesting occurrence during the visit. He merely says that he went to Sanganer to attend a marriage. He made this journey before the year Vikram 1684 or A.D. 1627, the year Jahangir died, as we can gather from his chronology of events during A. D. 1623 to A.D. 1635.[2] It is quite plausible that the visit was made around A. D. 1626, though he fails to mention the exact year. Bakhatram's date then could point to a momentous encounter, providing us ground to

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verse 599.

2 *Ibid.*, verses 599-615.

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speculate that it was during Banarasi's visit to Sanganer that seeds of scepticism were sown in Amar Singh's mind, erupting later into open rebellion. Banarasi himself had been incited to doubt and rebellion by a friend he had made during an earlier marriage trip.

Interesting as these two dates are, they provide us with no helpful clue as to when Banarasi was at last induced to join the Adhyatma movement. And a further question also naturally poses itself: when did he become the acknowledged leader of the Adhyatma group in Agra ? This must have occurred some time after he had become an established Adhyatmi. One would also be inclined to reason that even if he did finally join the movement some time between A.D. 1623 and 1635, he could not have become its leader during this period of spiritual turmoil. For, a man who is himself avowedly groping for the truth does not become a spiritual leader whose business it is to dispense truth, unless he were dishonest, and this is one accusation which would be unreasonable to level against Banarasi.

Yet we have indubitable contemporary evidence that he was already spearheading the Adhyatma in A. D. 1629. There is in Banarasi's posthumous collection of poems, *Banarasi Vilas*, a rather longish work in fifty verses called the *Gyanbavani* which was written not by Banarasi but by a poet called Pitambar. The poem was perhaps included in the *Banarasi Vilas* because though it was not *by* Banarasi, it was *about* him. Pitambar was commissioned to write it by an affluent Agra merchant named Kapurchand Sahu, a well-known Adhyatmi, and his other Adhyatmi friends including Kanwarpal, in Vikram 1686 (A.D. 1629). The purpose was to eulogise Banarasi and the Adhyatma group which acclaimed him its Master. Pitambar reports that one day as Kanwarpal and other Adhyatmis were gathered in Kapurchand Sahu's house discussing and admiring Banarasi's works and views, they asked Pitambar to compose a befitting tribute to Banarasi: the result was the *Gyanbavani*.[1]

1 *Banarasi Vilas*, p. 90, verses 50-52.

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Pitambar describes Banarasi as the leader of the Adhyatma Saili in Agra: "Arrayed around him, the Adhyatma group marches surefootedly towards the supreme mystic citadel,"[1] he says. By A.D. 1629, then, the year in which the *Gyanbavani* was composed, Banarasi had not only become a firm Adhyatmi but was also acclaimed as the leader of the Adhyatmis in Agra. The evidence of Pitambar, who was a contemporary of Banarasi and also knew him personally, is certainly weightier in dating Banarasi's connection with Adhyatma than that of Meghavijaya or Bakhatram, who wrote later. A question might, however, be raised about the date and authenticity of the *Gyanbavani* itself. But we can be sure that we have it in an uncorrupt, unchanged form, because the *Banarasi Vilas*, of which it is a part, was compiled in A. D. 1644 almost immediately after Banarasi's death.

Pitambar's evidence implies that by A. D. 1629 Banarasi had already been an Adhyatmi for some years, since in that year we discover him as the pre-eminent member of the group. But Pitambar gives us no indication as to when Banarasi joined the group.

Intriguingly, however, in A.D. 1629, when we find him as the leader of the Agra Adhyatmis, Banarasi was in the midst of his twelve-year period of crisis, a torment of doubt and darkness which had begun in A.D. 1623, when he met Arathmal Dhor, and which continued up to A.D. 1635 when he discovered an answer to his questionings in the *Gommatasara*. This is why the astute Nathuram Premi, who has done so much to discover hitherto unknown facts and tracts about Banarasi, maintained that Banarasi must have become an Adhyatmi only after A.D. 1635. Premi ignored Pitambar's evidence, or perhaps, as seems more plausible, failed to notice the significance of the testimony of the *Gyanbavani* in this connection. This testimony is, however, too overwhelming to be summarily brushed aside. Banarasi, we can only conclude, presented a strange, anomalous phenomenon: he was a spiritual leader who

1 *Ibid.*, p. 88, verse 45: 'Banārasīdās madhyanāyak sabhāsamūh adhyātam sailī calī mokṣa ke mahal mein.'

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was himself in a spiritual crisis. Nor is it likely that he made false claims to spiritual knowledge in order to win followers for himself. He was too candid and veracious to do this. Moreover, his profanities were public knowledge. His outrageously irreligious behaviour had, as he himself remarks, become a common topic for the Jains of Agra to gossip about and censure.[1] The Jain community of Agra was a close-knit group and Banarasi's flauntingly impious utterances and behaviour could not have remained hidden from it. Anyone who has lived in a small town knows that concealment in such matters is impossible from the towns-folk and the Agra Jains for all practical purposes formed a small-town nexus. The way he deported himself, Banarasi could not at the same time have posed as a man of supreme spiritual qualities, worthy of emulation.

This gives us a very unusual focus on him as well as on his group. It seems to have been quite different, in certain essential characteristics, from others of its kind. There were, in India during the 17th century, innumerable religious groups gathered around Masters of acclaimed spiritual knowledge and power, or gurus of the past who had become legends in the field of mystic realization. But Banarasi could not have been such a Master. He had no claims to spiritual attainments. He was an iconoclast, a rebel, protesting against what he thought was dead and meaningless in his faith. He and his followers must have formed a brotherhood, united not in reverence but in protest.

Not that Banarasi was not moved by a genuine spiritual quest. But unlike other gurus, he preached no precept or method for spiritual enlightenment, but laid emphasis on sheer inner seeking. His was a group in which Master and devotee alike were pilgrims searching for the true path. Pitambar's description, quoted earlier, where he pictures Banarasi as an illumined guide, is clearly a poetic hyperbole. Meghavijaya's characterization seems more authentic. He tells us that the keynote of Banarasi's manifesto was 'seeking'.

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verse 610.

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Meghavijaya was a contemporary of Kanwarpal, Banarasi's friend and companion who led the Adhyatma group after Banarasi. Meghavijaya knew the group from close quarters, and his judgement has an opponent's objectivity which Pitambar lacked. The Adhyatmis, Meghavijaya reports, asserted that they were men who had given up all sectarian bias, claiming to be neither Svetambaras nor Digambaras—the two main sects into which the Jains have been divided for over a millenium and a half—but seekers after truth.

The truth, they believed, was to be found in the mystic realization of the formless Spirit, and the path to it lay through an inner yearning and quest that had nothing to do with the rituals and precepts of formalised religion. We thus note that another orthodox monk Yasovijaya, who wrote a few tracts against the Adhyatmis somewhat earlier than Meghavijaya, characterizes them as a group of dissident nonconformists. "These charlatans," he caustically remarks, "are men who want to do away with prescribed forms of religion under the pretext of extolling the formless Spirit."[1] Like Meghavijaya, Yasovijaya was a Svetambara monk. He spent four years, from A.D. 1646 to 1650, in Agra as a student learning nyaya (logic) from an expert teacher. He must have become acquainted with Adhyatma almost immediately after Banarasi's death. He felt the growing strength of this heretical movement and wrote three polemical works against it: the *Adhyatmamatapariksa*, the *Adhyatmamatakhandana* and the *Dikpata Chaurasi Bol.* These are the earliest known orthodox attacks against the Adhyatmis.[2] Yasovijaya does not name Banarasi in his onslaught against the Adhyatmis. But, as the leader of the movement, he must have been the main target.

Before Banarasi, the Adhyatma movement was more like a

1 'lumpai vajjhaṁ kiriyaṁ jo khalu ajjhappabhāvakahaṇe ṇam/so hanai bohibījaṁ ummaggaparūvaṇaṁ kāvuṁ,' *Adhyatmamatapariksa*, verse 42, quoted on p. 40, Introduction to *Ardhakathanaka*.

2 *Ardhakathanaka*, Introduction, p. 42.

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nonconformist club than a determined religious body. It was only with him that it acquired a strong voice and an ardour for propagating its stand with an armoury of learned arguments. It also became a more cohesive group with a single leader, centred in Agra, the nerve-centre of the empire and consequently of the Jains whose commercial activity was inevitably tied up with it.

The earlier Adhyatma seems to have been in essence an intellectual movement loosely formed into small groups scattered over many towns, inspired by a spirit of critical scrutiny in religious matters. Moved by reason, it raised its voice against the palpable absurdities of belief and practice that had developed in the established religion. It protested against the dominance of the letter in matters concerning the spirit. It was clearly inspired by Kabir, Nanak, Dadu and a host of Nirguna saints who had similarly revolted against the dominance of dead, meaningless forms, but its primary moving force was apparently not a deep, mystic impulse but a sense of discursive enquiry, a questioning rooted in excogitation. It was only with Banarasi that the movement really began to make its presence felt. And though Banarasi emphasized inner seeking, he, too, was no mystic and the zeal of the group under him remained more impregnated with a rational rather than a mystic purpose.

The Adhyatma group comprised men from both the Svetambara and the Digambara sects. These ancient sects had been warring for centuries. But their difference rested on superficial matters which could not have withstood any searching rational scrutiny. Yet these trifles had become part of religious dogma and had thus acquired a canonic importance that could not be questioned. Reason could be only used to defend, not criticise them. Adherents of both sects wrote long treatises defending their opposing views on such squabbles as: Were women entitled to salvation ? Should a monk wear a single white cloth or should he wear none ? Do the omniscient Tirthankaras eat their food in mouthfuls like other humans or in some other superhuman manner ?

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Meghavijaya's lengthy attack on Adhyatma is, in a large part, nothing but a sustained argument in defence of the views held by the Svetambara sect on these issues. The Adhyatmis found them, for the most part, trivial and fatuous. When they did pass a judgement, they adopted a view that seemed to them the one dictated by reason. They did not feel impelled to a belief merely by the imperative force of dogma. They were a Jain version of the spirit of the times, ridiculing, like Kabir, superficialities of code, conduct or doctrine, an attitude which had become commonplace in the period. The rigid, conservative shell of Jainism was slow in being penetrated by the iconoclasm that was in the air, but none could be totally immune to its pervasive force. Adhyatma was the Jain expression of the age.[1]

1 Interestingly, Meghavijaya, too, sees in the Adhyatma phenomenon a sign of the times, albeit in a very different, very Indian manner: he viewed it as an expression of the moral decadence which is a natural outcome of the downward movement of the cosmic wheel of time. During the present wicked age, he says, people take to aberrant movements like Adhyatma because of a growing sense of materialism and the cultivation of inordinate selfishness and self-aggrandisement. The Adhyatmis, he asserts, deprecate ancient institutions because these are designed to encourage self-control (tapas) and charity (dāna) rather than the accumulation of things for oneself and unbridled self-indulgence. Times, he continues, are hard and money is scarce. Those who possess it do not want to part with it. They are averse to altruistic advice. They have become miserly and have no desire to spend anything on charity, sacred ceremonies or their preceptors, the monks. Such are the people who take to Adhyatma, finding in it a vindication and rationalisation of their own cupidity: "prāyeṇa kāladoṣāt bhavanti dānāt parāṅmukhā manujāḥ...avasarpiṇīsamayānubhāvāt dhanasya na mahatī utpattiḥ tadabhāvāt keciddhanārjene'pi mativaiklavyāt kārpaṇyaparavaśā dānāt svata eva nivartante; deveṣu guruṣu caityapujāhāradānādinā vyayabhayāt...ata eva pramādino yathecchāhārāvihārādiparāḥ, teṣāmatra mate ruciḥ śraddhā syāt..." *Yuktiprabodha*, vṛtti on verse 24. In an earlier passage Meghavijaya in a similar vein sarcastically remarks about Banarasi that his heretical doubts and questionings were caused by his lack of self-restraint, his inability to keep fasts and his inordinate, uncontrollable craving for rich food: 'jāyā vayaṭṭhiyassāvikayāpi tassānnapāṇaparibhoge/chuhatiṇhātisayeṇaṁ maṇasaṅkappāo vitigicchā', *Yuktiprabodha*, verse 5.

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And it retained its distinctly Jain character even in its scepticism. Disclaiming allegiance to either Svetambaras or Digambaras, the Adhyatmis yet remained entrenched in their parent Jainism. Their general denunciation of formalism in religion and reverence for the formless Spirit did not lead them to decry their traditional faith in toto. What they sought was to recover their faith in its pure form, free of meaningless encrustations. To this end, they hearkened back, like European Protestants, to an original, pristine state of their religion, wanting to rebuild their faith on the foundation of the unmixed, primal teachings of the Tirthankaras.[1] But this was easier said than done. Among the Jains there is no undisputed testament, no single text or body of literature commonly accepted by both the major sects as the authentic canon. In fact, one prime issue among the Svetambaras and the Digambaras is whether the ancient canon at all survives intact. The Svetambaras have preserved a large corpus of texts which they believe goes back authentically to Mahavira, the last Tirthankara. The Digambaras consider this literature as spurious.

Discovering the true sayings of the founders of Jainism is an entangled and difficult question requiring a stupendous amount of historical and textual probing for any satisfactory answer. The Adhyatmis were patently not interested in such an enquiry, nor were they equipped with the kind of scholarship required to undertake it. It is, in its analytical ramifications, a typically modern quest. What the Adhyatmis meant by a more pristine Jainism was a Jainism purer in spirit, a simpler, more inward-looking version of their faith, devoid of pointless formal trappings, lifeless ritual and irrational beliefs. Their ideal was a more thoughtful, contemplative, doctrine-oriented faith such as they could discern in medieval digests like the *Gommatasara* and the *Samayasara*.

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1 Thus Meghavijaya says of them: 'tathā ca yajjinavacanānusarī tadeva pramāṇaṁ nānyaditi khyāpitam...,' *Yuktiprabodha*, vṛtti on verse 10.

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But again, as often happens with movements inspired basically by discontent and a feeling of protest against what obtains, the Adhyatmis had surer ideas about how things should not be rather than what they should be. Moreover, being against all forms in principle, they seemed to have been reluctant in creating their own, and remained for a long time an amorphous body sharing certain common ideals and aspirations but having no crystallized institutions of their own. They were men joined together by a quest and a questioning rather than any defined creed or cult.

But any group must acquire some distinct formal institutions if it seeks to continue as an independent body. Banarasi seems to have felt such a need during the last years of his life after A.D. 1635 when his restless days of spiritual torment were over. In 1635, he reports, a merchant named Tihuna Sahu built a new temple where a famous scholar, Rupchand Pande, came and sojourned. The Adhyatmis, Banarasi says, prevailed upon Rupchand to expound to them the profound but difficult doctrines of the *Gommatasara*. Rupchand's exposition proved for Banarasi an illuminating experience. It was at this time that he imbibed the gunasthana doctrine which led him to realize the importance, albeit transitory and non-absolute, of rituals and other pious observances and practices enjoined by holy writ.[1] But to have realized this was one thing; to arrive at appropriate forms quite another. In spite of his newly acquired appreciation of the value of formalised rules, precepts and mores, he could not just accept things as they were; he could not bring himself to suddenly assent to the existing practices he had for so long found empty and meaningless. Yet he never seems to have made any real effort at forging a new, alternative framework. Meghavijaya, who has a great deal to say about Banarasi's views and ideas, has little to report about the practices approved by Banarasi. What he reports is in fact mostly negative in content: he speaks of observances Banarasi disapproved of. Meghavijaya's *Yuktiprabodha* was written a few decades after

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 631–633.

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Banarasi's death. Had Banarasi left behind a distinct, definite code, its influence would surely have been visible on the Adhyatma of Meghavijaya's day, and his critical, deprecating eye could not have missed it.

What Banarasi seems to have done, as we may infer from Meghavijaya, was to make eclectic adaptations from what he found in existing practices, both Svetambara and Digambara. He was born a Svetambara, and in his young days had assiduously practised Svetambara rituals for years. But he was converted to Adhyatma through the study of Digambara texts and the influence of companions, most of whom had been Digambaras before taking to Adhyatma. He thus came under the sway of Digambara codes too. Meghavijaya particularly names Rupchand as the inspirer of his Digambara leanings.[1]

Banarasi picked out elements from both sects in order to design his own rudimentary formulation of a distinct code. His choice was apparently motivated by a desire to simplify. For the rest he allowed his group to drift along with established conventions and practices as were current among the Jains.

The Adhyatma, which survives today as Terapanth, is a Digambara sect. The Digambara element seems to have dominated over the Svetambara even in the early days of the movement. Yasovijaya, who was its earliest opponent and a Svetambara, assailed it as a form of Digambarism. The Adhyatmis, he says, are the followers of false Digambara doctrines.[2] Meghavijaya, iterating the Adhyatmis own assertion, speaks of them as neither Svetambara or Digambara. Yet he, too, implies that Digambara

1 'vāṇārasīdāso' pi rupacandrādidigambaramatīya vāsanayā śvetāmbaramataṁ parasparaviruddhatvāt na samyak ityādikāṅkṣāṁ prāptavān...,' *Yuktiprabodha*, vṛtti on verse 8.

2 'mithyātvamohanīyakarmodayavaśādviparītaprarūpaṇāpravaṇā digambarāḥ, tanmatānuyāyinaścādhyātmikāḥ,' quoted on p. 40, Introduction, *Ardhakathānaka*.

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elements were in preponderance in their ways of thought and practice: at one place he even calls them neo–Digambaras.[1] The full name for the subtitle of his *Yuktiprabodha* is *Varanasiya Digambara Mata Khandanam.*

Early Jains, like early Buddhists, built no temples and did not believe in image–worship. But by the beginning of the Christian era, Jains and Buddhists alike had begun to propitiate idols of the propagators of their faith, housing them in imposing shrines. Over the centuries, the ritual of worship among the Jains had become quite as elaborate and ceremonious as among the more pronounced cultic and image–worshipping Vaisnavas and Saivas. Like other Jains, Banarasi accepted Tirthankara worship through propitiation of images. It never occurred to him to question the authenticity of the practice. This may appear inconsistent with his desire to go back to the pure and original form of his faith, but we must remember that Banarasi could never have imagined that image worship was not an early Jain institution: it was a universal Jain practice by his time, unquestionably pristine. And he was no historian. It is only recently that we have come to uncover the fact that image–worship was absent from Jainism in its early days.

Though Banarasi approved of image–worship, he endeavoured to simplify the rite. He advised his followers to prune away many of the flamboyant excesses that had become part of the ceremony. He forbade the beautifying of Tirthankara images with costly dresses, garlands, ornaments and the like, arguing that such things were appropriate for pleasure–seeking worldly men, not Tirthankaras, who were the most supreme of ascetics.[2]

Meghavijaya detects in this a Digambara influence.[3]

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1 'navyāśāmbarāḥ vārāṇasīyā...,' *Yuktiprabodha*, vṛtti on verse 22.

2 Meghavijaya reports: 'jinapratimānāṁ bhūṣaṇādyaṅgapūjā na kāryā. bhagavato nirañjanasya vītarāgasya mūrtteḥ sarāgatvābhivyañjanena paridhāpāderanaucityāt...,' *Yuktiprabodha*, vṛtti on verse 20.

3 *Yuktiprabodha*, verse 20: 'jinapaḍimāṇaṁ bhūṣaṇamālāruhaṇai aṅgapariyaraṇaṁ/baṇārasio vārai digambarassagamaṇāe.'

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The Digambara monks live completely in the nude, but they are obliged by their faith to carry a broom-like picchika and a kamandalu jar as symbols of their monkhood. This, Banarasi thought, was ridiculous: why should men who have completely renounced the world carry objects as marks advertising the state of their soul ? No sign or apparel or the absence of it could, according to him, be an expression of renunciation, for renunciation was an inner attitude of the soul and had nothing to do with the conventional habit or habitat decreed for a monk, whether a naked Digambara or a white-clad Svetambara.[1]

Indeed, Banarasi went to the length, rare in Jain religious history, of deprecating the superiority of the monks. Movements of protest and reform proclaiming a purer ideal have not been unknown to Jainism; but they have been led by monks. Adhyatma in this respect, manifested an unprecedented feature. It was initiated, propagated and sustained by householders who remained active men of affairs, vigorously engaged in commerce even when they devoted themselves intently to religion. Unlike other Jain sects which are organised around monks, Adhyatma had no such order. This state of affairs prompted Meghavijaya to remark that the Adhyatmis had no gurus. He was using the word 'guru' in the traditional Jain sense of the term, which meant an ordained monk, implying that leaders and followers alike among Adhyatmis were householders : such as Banarasi and Kanwarpal, men committed to their profession as merchants.

Banarasi, Kanwarpal and the other Adhyatmis who succeeded these two as leaders of the movement, were, in other ways too, men unusual as spiritual leaders. They were urbane, educated men of the world. They owed allegiance to the most rigorously

1 Cf *Ibid.*, vṛtti on verse 7: 'yato hi vyavahāraḥ śrādhasya dvādaśavratācaraṇādirūpaḥ munīnāṁ pañcamahāvratapañcasamitipratipālanādirūpaḥ, ubhayamapi caitadyāvatā mano na vaśyaṁ jātaṁ yāvatā cādhyātmabhāvanā...vivekarūpā na bhavitā tāvatā'nantaśo jantunā'vāptamapi mokṣāya na prabhaviṣṇu.' See also vṛtti on verse 15,

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ascetic religion, and they, too, on their part, were convinced that there was no salvation without renunciation. But though they took their religion seriously, they yet never seriously thought of giving up the world. What mattered, they argued—like many before them in India—was the renouncing spirit and the genuineness of the inner quest for knowledge. Anything imposed extraneously was so much dead matter.

Jainism is very insistent on rigorous self-denial and abstinence, exhorting its followers to undertake long, constant fasts and other acts of asceticism and mortification. Non-killing (ahimsa) is a fundamental Jain tenet, and consequently Jains are strict vegetarians. In addition, a good Jain is expected to forbear even from many vegetarian articles of food such as leafy vegetables, curds and the like, because these are often the home of tiny, imperceptible insects, to kill which would be a sin. The intense, inordinate desire to avoid killing prompts devout Jains also to eat before it is dark, for in the dark it becomes difficult to espy miniscule creatures that might happen to fall into one's food.

His ascetic ideal demands of an assiduous Jain householder that he should gradually reduce his pleasures and indulgences to the minimum, endeavouring to shape his deportment and behaviour on the strict model of the monk's code by undertaking vows and penances of increasing austerity. Banarasi also undertook such vows as a young man. Later, as an Adhyatmi, he became convinced that a forced physical giving-up and self-torment was not the way to the Spirit: what was needed was an inner detachment and renunciation. He thus became weary of vows and rules for restricted behaviour, and broke them openly and flauntingly without compunction. "Banarasi," Meghavijaya says, "began to think that only a man who had arrived at the Truth from within was really free; and thinking thus, he no longer believed in abstaining from rich food; he therefore gave up the ordained path of observing vows, practising charity, celibacy and self-mortification."[1]

1 *Yuktiprabodha*, verse 13.

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Indeed, he went to the other extreme and began to indulge himself greedily, especially in food, and 'ate like a beast,' as he himself puts it.[1] Meghavijaya, like a modern psychologist seeking hidden unconscious motives for a man's beliefs and ideals, traceshis fine talk of spiritual detachment to his failure in being able to curb his own cravings and appetites.[2]

Even after Banarasi had begun to view rules and restrictions in a more favourable light, he yet seems to have retained a strong feeling that they were a matter of subordinate importance. This is plainly reflected in the fact that Adhyatma did not attach itself to any established order of monks, nor cared for creating one of its own. The ancient Jain ideal of asceticism is stringently austere and consists of numerous self-denying penances, vows, and restraints; it can only be realized in the strictly controlled and rigorous life of a monk. The Adhyatmis had no order of monks to look up to. They had, in Meghavijaya's significant phrase, no gurus — no ordained monks as mentors. This, Meghavijaya adds, was the reason why they were also devoid of kriya: proper rules of conduct and observance, of which the monks were the final repositories and arbiters.

We do not know the exact details of the diluted code of conduct Banarasi substituted for the old rigorous ascetic ideal. Yet on the analogy of his injunctions concerning the rites of image-worship, we can reasonably imagine that he must have preached a softened version of conventional practices aiming at a kind of moderate middle-path. He must also have taught that restraint should flow from within and transcend the need for such external controls and codes that govern a monk's life.

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1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verse 612.

2 *Yuktiprabodha*, verse 5.

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The Adhyatma movement thus emerges as an unusual phenomenon and it would therefore be interesting to survey its history after Banarasi at some length and see how far the initial impulse to question and reason survived intact in later times.

The year of Banarasi's death is uncertain. He wrote the *Ardhakathanaka* in A.D. 1641 when he was 55. Jagjivan, a keen Agra Adhyatmi, published the posthumous *Banarasi Vilas* in A.D. 1644 with the aim of putting together in a single work all of Banarasi's shorter poems and prose pieces that he could collect. Banarasi thus died before he was 60. The last dated work from his pen recorded in the *Banarasi Vilas* was written in A.D. 1643.

Jagjivan, the compiler of the *Banarasi Vilas*, is not named by Banarasi and does not figure as a member of Banarasi's close group of friends. But presumably he had some intimacy with Banarasi and must have met him at gatherings of common Adhyatma friends such as the one Pitambar speaks of. Unlike Banarasi's other friends, Jagjivan was not a businessman but a government official. We have some contemporary information regarding him from Pandit Hiranand, another Adhyatmi, who wrote a work called the *Samavasarana Vidhana* in A.D. 1644—the year in which the *Banarasi Vilas* was compiled—at the instance of Jagjivan. We learn from him that Jagjivan belonged to the Agrawal clan of merchants and served as a divan under a noble named Jafar Khan.[1] The word 'divan' in common parlance was an ambiguous term and could be used for any reasonably high officer; Jagjivan, with his business background, perhaps looked after Jafar Khan's financial affairs. When Jafar Khan was appointed governor of Punjab in A.D. 1647, Jagjivan may have acted

1 *The Ma'asir-ul-Umra* records Jafar's name with an added honorific title as Jafar Khan, Umdat-ul-Mulk. He was a favourite of Shah Jahan from childhood. Jafar's mansab was raised to 5000 in the tenth year of Shah Jahan's reign. For a while he lost the emperor's affection. But he must have regained favour by A.D. 1644, when Hiranand speaks of his mansab as 5000.

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as his provincial 'divan' or chief revenue officer.

Hiranand speaks of two other Adhyatmis of his acquaintance, Pandit Hemraj and Bhagvatidas. Bhagvati we have met earlier; Banarasi names him as a close companion. Pandit Hemraj came into eminence in the Adhyatma movement after Banarasi's death. In A.D. 1650 he wrote a small tract called *Sitapata Chaurasi Bol*, an affirmation of Adhyatmic belief in opposition to Svetambaras. It was this work which moved Yasovijaya to write his *Dikapata Chaurasi Bol*[1] as a riposte. Maghavijaya comments that Hemraj's tract was designed to win over Svetambaras to the Adhyatma heresy.[2]

Adhyatma did indeed succeed in winning many adherents, weaning them from their traditional Svetambara or Digambara faiths. With the advent of Banarasi, the Agra group had become the vanguard of the movement. We do not hear of the earlier centres in the eastern towns such as Banaras and Fatehpur anymore. Probably the older groups in these towns accepted the leadership of their more dynamic Agra brethren, or else they led an obscure, independent existence for some time before dissolving into the mainstream of Jainism. Adhyatma now spread westwards from its powerful nucleus in Agra. We hear thenceforth of centres in Lahore, Multan, Rajasthan and Delhi. In Agra itself Pandit Dyanatrai in his *Dharmavilas* speaks of a flourishing Adhyatma group in A.D. 1693. It was led by a jeweller called Mansingh.[3] After that we no longer hear of the movement in that town.

But it had already struck roots elsewhere. A scholar named Pandit Kharagsen, writing in A. D. 1656, speaks of a dynamic

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, Introduction, p. 41.

2 'navyāśāmbarā vāṇārasīyāḥ śvetāmbaragītārthebhyo vyākhyānaṁ śṛṇvanto'nyajanasya tacchāsana śraddhāvibhaṅgāya caturaśītiṁ jalpān caryāśayaviṣayīcakruḥ tannibandho'pi kavitvarītyā hemarajapaṇditena nibaddaḥ...,' *Yuktiprabodha*, vṛtti on verse 22.

3 *Ardhakathanaka*, Introduction, p. 36.

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Adhyatma group in Lahore. He gives us a list of the more prominent Adhyatmis of that town. The list includes the names of Jagjivan and Pandit Hiranand, who, we have seen, were active members of the Agra group. Perhaps Jagjivan had a hand in carrying the movement to that town. In A.D. 1647, the nineteenth year of Shah Jahan's rule, Jafar Khan was appointed governor of Punjab.[1] Jagjivan must have moved to Lahore, the provincial capital, with his patron. Living there, he perhaps initiated the Jains of the town into the new, growing Adhyatma.

But the presence of a proselytising Adhyatmi was not really necessary for the movement to travel. The Jain merchants were an extremely mobile community, constantly moving between important towns for the purposes of business. It was easy for ideas to diffuse. This, according to Bakhatram, was, in fact, how Adhyatma did make its way to new places. In his *Mithyatvakhandananataka* he says : "Many merchants journeyed to Agra for trade, and during their sojourn there were attracted to Adhyatma and its new-fangled code, becoming converts to it."[2]

Multan had become another big centre of Adhyatma. We have some interesting information concerning the activity of the group there from surviving works by the more literary Adhyatmis of that town. An affluent Multan merchant called Vardhaman Naulakha, who was a staunch Adhyatmi, wrote a work called the *Vardhaman Vacanika* in A. D. 1689. He hails Banarasi as a Master and speaks repeatedly of the spiritual debt he owed to that Adhyatma leader.[3] Vardhaman's writings date about five decades after Banarasi, and it is difficult to say if he was inspired by Banarasi in person or indirectly by his example and writings. It is quite within the bounds of likeli-

1 See *Maasir-ul-Umra* under 'Jafar Khan, Umdat-ul-Mulk.'

2 'kite mahājan āgre jāt karan vyaupār/bani āve adhyātamī lakhi nūtan ācār,' *Mithyatvakhandananataka*, verse 26.

3 *Ardhakathanaka*, pp. 108-109.

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hood that in his early youth he met the mature Master during a visit to Agra, and became converted to the new unorthodox sect under his direct sway.

But Vardhaman speaks of a monk named Dayasagar as his mentor. Dayasagar, he says, revealed to him the Truth. Who was this Dayasagar ? We know nothing about him apart from this stray information. Adhyatma, we have said, unlike other Jain sects, had no order of monks affiliated to it. In fact monks of the more established sects were quite vocal in their denunciation of the new group because it posed a threat to their authority. The Adhyatmis of Multan had become involved in a bitter debate with Dharmavardhana, a learned Svetambara monk of the Kharataragaccha order, who was active between A.D. 1652 and A.D. 1700. They asked Dharmavardhana a number of questions on Jain doctrine. These questions, Dharmavardhana complains in his *Adhyatma Matiyaro Savaiyo*, were loaded questions, posed in such a manner that the answer could only strengthen the Adhyatma stand. They were, he says, not asked in the right enquiring spirit but were intended to confuse and puzzle.[1] The sore Dharmavardhana minces no words in venting his anger against the Adhyatmis. He calls them conceited, illiterate fools who have replaced the immemorial sacred texts with childish works of their own. They do not even know the alphabet, he says, yet claim to know the supreme Spirit. He seems to have been particularly annoyed by the fact that the Adhyatmis visited the saints and yogis of the Hindus with great devotion but refused to revere the monks of their own religion.[2]

Yet some monks did feel the magnetism of the direct, uncluttered, spiritual approach adopted by Adhyatma. And Dayasagar was not the only monk to be attracted by it. In Multan itself we

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1 *Ibid*, Introduction, p. 45.

2 *Ibid., loc cit.*

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hear of two more : Dharma Mandir and Muni Devachand, both of whom wrote several works influenced by Adhyatma ideas.

In Muni Devachand's *Dhyanadipika*, which was written in A.D. 1709, twenty years after the *Vardhaman Vacanika*, we find names of a somewhat later group of Adhyatmis active in Multan. *Dhyanadipika* was composed at the behest of a businessman called Bhansali Mitthumal whom Devachand calls a prominent Adhyatmi of the town, a town where, he adds, the Jains are all Adhyatmis. Mitthumal was an old Adhyatmi. His name is included in the list Vardhaman gives us in his *Vardhaman Vacanika.*

Vardhaman speaks of another important Adhyatmi, a merchant called Sukhanand, and of an Adhyatma Saili (group) led by him.[1] A Jain named Dyanatrai wrote a work called the *Dharmavilas* in A.D. 1693, four years after the *Vardhaman Vacanika.* He tells us that Sukhanand's Adhyatma group belonged to Delhi.

Another town which was quickly drawn into the spreading ring of Adhyatma was Kama, which is near Bharatpur in Rajasthan. It lies between Agra and Sanganer, and Bakhatram, sketching the history of the movement, reports that Adhyatma teachings first reached Kama from Agra, from where they travelled to Sanganer.[2] We have an interesting letter, dated A. D. 1692, written by the Adhyatmis of Kama to those of Sanganer. The Kama Adhyatmis exhort their Sanganer brethren to give up certain unseemly excesses that were part of orthodox temple service, and which they themselves had already discarded.[3]

We do not know if the Sanganer group which has been addressed in this letter is identical with the Adhyatma-inspired brotherhood which came to be called Terapanth, and which was led by Amar Singh Godika of whom we have spoken earlier.

1 *Ibid.*, Introduction, p. 94.
2 *Mithyatvamatakhandanananataka*, verse 22.
3 *Ardhakathanaka*, Introduction, pp. 51-52.

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This question is important because it is as Terapanth that the Adhyatma movement continued and survives today.

It is uncertain whether Godika's group called itself Terapanth from its very inception. But by A. D. 1669, it had certainly assumed this name. This is definitely proved by a verse written in A.D. 1669 by Jodhraj, the son and successor of Godika as the leader of this group. Jodhraj explicitly calls his group Terapanth. Addressing the Tirthankara with a clever double-entendre on the word 'tera', which, in Hindi, means 'your' as well as 'thirteen', he says that the thirteenth (tera) path (panth) he follows is different from the other twelve false paths that men are wont to traverse. "It is, O Tirthankara," he concludes, "your own (tera) true path."[1] We find Jodhraj active between A.D. 1660 and 1670. The two tracts he wrote are dated A.D. 1667 and 1669.

The Kama letter was written in A.D. 1692 and includes a list of the eminent Adhyatmis living at that time in Sanganer, men to whom the letter was addressed. Jodhraj's name does not appear in the list. We cannot say if Jodhraj was still alive at that date. But if he was, then the omission of his name is significant. It could only imply that an Adhyatma group different from Terapanth—perhaps parallel to it—had emerged in Sanganer towards the end of the 17th century. For had Jodhraj been still living and had his group been the only group following Adhyatma ideas in Sanganer, then the Kama letter could not have failed to list his name: who could have been a more eminent addressee ? But since we do not know when Jodhraj Godika died, we are not in a position to preclude the possibility of there being in Sanganer an Adhyatma group at this period distinct from Terapanth. This group could not, however, have been very long-lived. We do not hear of any non-Terapanth Adhyatma group in Sanganer after this time. If there ever was such a group it must have later

1 'yāhi bārā panth me bharami rahyo sabai lok/kahai jodhā ho jin terāpanth terā hai,' from Jodhraj's *Pravacanasara Bhasa*, quoted in Bharilla, *Pandit Todarmal : Vyaktitva Aur Kartrtva*, p. 25.

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merged with the Terapanth, which continued to flourish even while Adhyatma proper seems to have begun to lose its hold and power over the Jains. The decline of Adhyatma proper appears to have set in within a century of Banarasi's death and we do not hear of its activities thence. But the Terapanth continued to grow with vigour.

Therefore, let us now direct our attention to Terapanth. We have spoken earlier of the likelihood that Amar Singh Godika, the initiator of the movement, had come in direct contact with Banarasi and was ignited to rebellion by him. We had surmised from Banarasi's story that the two might have met in Sanganer around A. D. 1626. If our guess is correct, Amar Singh's break from orthodoxy must have soon followed this event.

Later stories and reports however, give us no clear date for the event. They are, in fact, quite muddled and contradictory about the beginnings of Terapanth. We get two very different dates. Also, there are two different versions of an interesting and dramatic story of how the Terapanth was born.

According to Bakhatram, who wrote in the 18th century, Amar Singh, its originator, was an extremely rich man. His wealth had made him insolent and presumptuous, giving him a haughty air and a superior attitude. He was in the habit of openly scorning the Jain teachings of his Digambara faith. The pious Jains of Sanganer could not tolerate such irrreligious behaviour and banned his entry to their temple. Amar Singh retaliated by gathering around him a group of twelve heretical men, built a new temple, and founded the aberrant sect of Terapanth. Bakhatram dates this event to A. D. 1716—almost a century after the date he gives for the beginning of Adhyatma in A. D. 1626. "This deluded, sinful doctrine," he says of Terapanth, "was established in Vikram 1773."[1]

1 *Ardhakathanaka,* Introduction, p. 49, fn. 4 : 'sataraḥ sau tihottare sāl/ mata thāpyau aisen aghajāl,'

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If Bakhatram's dates are correct, then our earlier conjecture that Amar Singh possibly met Banarasi proves to be completely off the mark. But Bakhatram's date is impossible. In A.D. 1667, Jodhraj, the son of Amar Singh, wrote his *Samyaktva Kaumudi Katha* which was followed by the *Pravacanasara*, written in A. D. 1669. From this latter work we discover that he had already given the name of Terapanth to his group of dissenters.

A different version of the story is found in an undated work called the *Kabitta Terapanth Ko*, by Chandkavi. According to this poet, it was not Amar Singh but his son Jodhraj who fathered the Terapanth sect. Jodhraj, the story goes, was proficient in Jain sacred lore. Once the famous Digambara teacher Bhattaraka Narendrakirti came to Sanganer for a four-month sojourn during the rains. He gave regular discourses on various religious topics to his followers, as was his wont. Jodhraj, too, attended these lectures. But so conceited was he and so cocksure of his superior learning that he impudently interrupted the Bhattaraka repeatedly with insolent remarks, parading his knowledge of the sacred texts with great effront. The incensed congregation could not brook such impudence, which to their mind was a brazen contempt of their guru and faith. They threw Jodhraj out of their midst, and ostracised him from their sect. Jodhraj retaliated vengefully by founding a new sect. He named it Terapanth because it was distinguished by thirteen (tera) novel tenets.

Chandkavi dates this event to A.D. 1618,[1] almost a hundred years earlier than the date noted by Bakhatram. Chandkavi's date seems much too early for a revolt engineered by Jodhraj. It was not till the decade between A.D. 1660 and 1670 that Jodhraj began writing on religious subjects. He was, moreover, as Chandkavi himself says, a contemporary of Narendrakirti. From temple inscriptions and other records we gather that Narendrakirti was active in the decade between A.D. 1650 and 1660 and, imaginably,

1 'samavat solassai pacottare kārtikamās amāvas kārī,' *Ardhakathanaka*, Introduction, p. 52.

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also after A.D. 1660.[1] It is extremely implausible, then, that Jodhraj accosted him as early as A.D. 1618. Indeed, if the beginning of Terapanth is to be dated to the first quarter of the 17th century, its founder must have been Amar Singh and not Jodhraj. And in that case our earlier surmise that Banarasi met and influenced Amar Singh during his sojourn in Sanganer may not be far wrong. It is likely, however, that the name Terapanth was attached to the movement only with the advent of Jodhraj.

Jodhraj's active career is clearly post–Banarasi. And, indeed, in his *Pravacanasara*, which was written in A.D. 1669, Jodhraj acknowledges his debt to Hemraj, the famous Adhyatmi who wrote *Sitapata Caurasi Bol* in A.D. 1650, a few years after Banarasi's death.

Jodhraj, like his father, was a merchant by profession. He stands out as the most prominent man in the early history of the Terapanth. He was the first man in the movement to write books propagating his ideas. But the man most revered in Terapanth today is Pandit Todarmal, who came a century later. Todarmal was active not in Sanganer but in the nearby Jaipur, the new capital of the Kacchwaha state.

Todarmal, too, was a merchant by profession. His date of birth is unknown. We find him busy writing and teaching from about A.D. 1740 to 1766, the year he died. Bakhatram, from whom we gather a number of facts about his career, was his contemporary and a sworn enemy; he was a dedicated orthodox Digambara and a virulent defender of his faith against heresies such as Terapanth.

In his *Buddhi Vilas*, written in A.D. 1770, Bakhatram has preserved for us a rare glimpse of the Jaipur of his time as well as a chronicle of certain contemporary events, momentous for the Jains of the town. Bakhatram reports that certain bigoted brahmans, who bitterly hated the Jains, falsely charged them with

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, pp. 133–134.

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the desecration of a Siva shrine (sivapindi) and instigated the ruling king, Madho Singh, to chastise and punish them. Madho Singh unleashed the State forces against the Jains. Terapanth sources allege that during the ensuing upheaval, Todarmal was brutally murdered. Religious persecution by Hindu rulers was a rare thing, and history books are silent on this fact. But Jain sources testify quite circumstantially to more than one episode of merciless intolerance that occurred during the rule of Madho Singh.[1]

These disruptions, however, seem to have been temporary, and Terapanth grew to larger dimensions after Todarmal. Today it is an important sect of the Digambaras with a large following spread over many states, chiefly Rajasthan, Gujrat, Madhya Pradesh, Western U. P. and Delhi.[2]

It would be interesting to append here the description of a Terapanth Saili (group) and its activities recorded by a zealous Jain called Raimalla, who in his eagerness for knowledge visited Jaipur to meet Todarmal some time before A.D. 1764. Todarmal was already celebrated far and wide for his learning and sainthood.

Raimalla's writings are instructive. The movement which had begun as a protest against the unseemly subjugation of the spirit by the letter had, in the latter part of 18th century, when Raimalla wrote about it, merged into the regular orthodox stream, becoming

1 A few years before the events which resulted in Todarmal's death, Shyam Tiwari, a Hindu priest (purohit) and a great favourite of Madho Singh, poisoned the king's ears against the Jains. Madho Singh suppressed and terrorised the Jains for 18 months, a period which came to be known as the 'tyranny of Shyam' (shyamgardi) from the name of its instigator. Madho Singh relented later and exiled Shyam Tiwari, but not before a similar incident took place again, claiming Todarmal as a victim. See Hukum Chand Bharilla, *Pandit Todarmal : Vyaktitva aur Kartrtva*, pp. 34-35, for more details as well as contemporary sources of information, which include the *Buddhi Vilas*.

2 This Digambara Terapanth should be distinguished from Svetambara Terapanth, another movement with a similar thrust towards simplicity and austerity. Svetambara Terapanth was initiated in the 19th century.

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one among the other accepted cults of Digambara Jains, with its own temples, rituals, codes and a big following. Raimalla speaks specifically of two magnificent temples in Jaipur which were visited daily by thousands of Terapanthi men and women, eager for religious merit, who offered worship to the Tirthankaras according to the rites of the sect.

Suggestive in this connection is a letter written by Raimalla in A.D. 1764 where he describes enthusiastically and in imposing detail an impressive religious fair organised by the Terapanthis on the foothills of Moti Dungri (a small hillock near Jaipur). The occasion was Indradhvaj puja, a ritual propitiation of the flagstaff of Indra, the chief of the gods. The puja was celebrated with all the pomp and ostentation that the affluent Terapanth could summon. Over 150 skilled craftsmen were employed at great expense to erect a huge platform, 64 yards square, in order to house a miniature model of the cosmos as conceived in Jain mythology. The result, as the charmed Raimalla describes it, must have been spectacular: on display was a gilded, glittering, toy-world of houses, temples, palaces, rivers, trees, oceans, mountains, woods and myriad other terrestrial and heavenly things which make up the visible and the supramundane world as conceived by the Jains. We can imagine the spectacle if we picture to ourselves a magnified version of the toy-assemblages displayed in many temples and pious homes during the Janmasthami festival, representing Krishna's birth and escape from prison.

Tents were erected all around the platform on which the toy-cosmos had been assembled, and hundreds of devotees from as far as Agra, Delhi, Udaipur, Bikaner and even Aurangabad and Multan came to attend the festivities which lasted for many days. Raimalla remarks that the king of Jaipur extended his cooperation and aid to make the occasion a success, commenting that the festival could not even have been held without his consent.[1] Evidently, he was at peace with the Jains at this time.

1 Raimalla, *Jivan Patrika, op. cit.*, p. 336.

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But though the character of Banarasi's movement had changed considerably, the Adhyatma–inspired Terapanth still retained some of its earlier traits. One of these was an awareness of the importance of constantly going back to the ancient texts in order to discover the true nature of their religion and its spiritual roots. There was, Raimalla reports, a group of about fifty to hundred men within the sect who were engaged in studying ancient texts in Hindi translations, and a smaller Sanskrit–knowing group which had access to the originals for this purpose; many, numbering from fifty to hundred, were also devoted to the more probing task of discussing and resolving questions and problems concerning obtuse or obscure matters of religion and doctrine.

The sect had also retained the vestiges of a questioning attitude. The organisation in Jaipur regularly received letters from members living in far-away towns seeking answers to disturbing questions on doctrine or practice, to which it regularly despatched answers.[1]

The questioning spirit Banarasi showed in religion was apparently limited to that field. In politics he belies a strangely complacent attitude, a resigned, unquestioning, acquiescent disposition towards even the most outrageously arbitrary actions of authority, as if these were inevitable and beyond any human control or questioning. He witnessed and suffered more than one unpredictable convulsion, caused by the strange whims of those in power, convulsions that rocked the merchant community of which he was a member to its very foundations, resulting in great unsettlement and agony. The merchants had learnt to endure these political upheavals with a tenacity that had almost become a second nature to them, waiting patiently for the tide to pass away. Banarasi too, seems to have shared this passive psychology. Characteristic of his

1 *Ibid., loc. cit.*

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attitude was the manner in which he reacted to the two violent persecutions of community of which we have spoken earlier. Evidently, for Banarasi, as for many of his fellow men, political disorder, known in India as raja-bhiti, belonged, according to a popular old adage, to the same species of disruption as an 'iti' : a natural disorder, and had to be borne patiently. One had to adapt to it as best as one could, for reacting against it in righteous anger was meaningless and futile.

We must not, however, judge Banarasi too harshly in this respect. If he was not a political activist, there were none in his age. Religion, on the other hand, was rife with saints and mystics rebelling against dead ritualism. And if Banarasi had the courage to question and protest in this field, he had many precursors. Yet politics remained largely untouched by the activity of these men. Banarasi was no exception.

We must also allow for another possibility. Banarasi's indifference to politics might have been a matter of individual inclination. Many of the most aware of men, after all, never feel an interest in politics; the expectation that such an interest itself is a necessary sign of awareness is a modern expectation not shared by all ages. We must also not lose sight of the possibility that there were men among Banarasi's friends who were more concerned with the workings of the political system than he was; men, for instance, like Jagjivan, who served important people in power. Such men must have had a deeply personal, self-interested involvement in political affairs. And although it is true that an involvement of this kind is quite different from the altruistic concern for justice expected of the modern intellectual, yet—since self-interest is also to be found coupled with an impersonal, moral concern—many thoughtful men in public service must have pondered over the right and wrong of political action independent of the viewpoint of personal gain or loss. Alas, such men have left no memories !

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Banarasi's resigned approach to politics could lead one to raise a deeper, more general question regarding his orientation to the world : was he a fatalist ? Many readers might come away with a strong impression that he indeed was one, especially because of his frequent harping on karma. Often Banarasi's final comment to end all others, in many a times of suffering, is that what happened was the result of the inscrutable workings of past karma. Who but a man with a strong belief in the inevitability of destiny would react thus ?

But we must not be too hasty in our judgement. To conclude that belief in karma amounts to fatalism is itself an inference of questionable validity. The doctrine of karma makes men's deeds responsible for the fruits they reap, a view certainly not in harmony with fatalism. Yet it has been remarked that whatever karma may denote as a sophisticated metaphysical concept, surely, at the popular level, the idea is indistinguishable from the notion of fate : to offer karma as the explanation of one's lot amounts to an abject resignation to destiny.

Let us try to examine if Banarasi was resigned to karma in this popular sense. Was he really a fatalist ?

Before pondering over this question, we should not forget that as a serious student of Jain doctrines Banarasi was well aware of the more sophisticated, non-fatalistic meaning of karma, a concept which holds a fundamental position in all Indian faiths. The Jains, like other Indian thinkers, subscribe to the view that karma entails ultimate responsibility of the agent himself for what he comes to experience. Still, some readers might feel that though he may have been groomed in philosophy, Banarasi's purpose in the *Ardhakathanaka* was not to talk philosophy but to relate his personal experience and spontaneous reactions to the brute circumstances of his life, which he does in the common language of his times, narrating his lifestory as a common man, a typical product of those times. No wonder then,

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if like millions of his contemporaries, he is using the concept of karma not in a philosophical sense but to express a profound sense of pessimism and an indelible belief in fate which no amount of philosophy could have washed away.

And Banarasi does often blame things on karma, especially his many sudden illnesses. He found their unwarranted appearance inexplicable except through the inexorable workings of the evil karma of his past.[1] The reason, perhaps, was his ignorance of medicine. Indian doctors, like other Indians, believed in karma, but they also spoke of other, more immediate causes of disease, or else their whole exercise in diagnosis and cure would have been meaningless. But Banarasi was not a student of medicine; otherwise he too would have attempted to trace more palpable causes before jumping straightaway to the ultimate cause: karma. Yet we may be prepared to grant that Banarasi really had his fatalistic moments. We all have them. This alone does not make him a pessimist, resigned entirely to fate, believing despondently that man was a plaything in the hands of destiny, not responsible for what happened to him, his efforts amounting to nothing.

One example, in particular, will reveal that he was, in truth, no fatalist. Let us consider his comments on the dismal failure of his early attempts at making money in Agra. Chance had a big part in his failure. It was through sheer ill-luck that he lost a good deal of his merchandise in precious stones. It would have been only human to blame a cruel destiny. And he does speak of evil karma as the cause of his unqualified losses which reduced him to near-paupery.[2] Yet he does not give in to hopeless inaction or futile self-pity, for he could also see that a major cause of his failure was his own ineptness : his ignorance and inexperience in the ways of business. And for this reason, though he felt deeply frustrated for a while, he never succumbed to

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 95; 184; 325.

2 *Ibid.*, verse 318.

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despondency, but succeeded in emerging out of his gloom and despair to begin efforts anew. Banarasi had enough self-awareness to be able to see his faults and face them. At no point does he use the concept of karma as a scapegoat for avoiding self-criticism or resigned inaction.

His response, I think, could be better understood in the light of the ancient complementary pair of concepts concerning human action, namely daiva and purusakara, which are deeply embedded in the Indian psyche. Daiva and purusakara mean chance and human effort, and the two together are said to govern the success of any human undertaking. Popular wisdom literature is replete with tales and sayings purporting to reveal their interplay. This complementary pair of concepts is perhaps common to all human cultures, especially at the popular level of unsophisticated thinking, and Banarasi, too, seemed to have shared it, as is witnessed by his actions if not his actual words.

Banarasi's first wife seems to have had a firmer faith in the all-powerful domination of destiny over human action. Consoling him after his repeated failures in Agra, she tells him that a man's success was entirely in the hands of fate (honahar) and therefore he should not feel sorry for what was beyond his control.[1] Yet even to her mind this was no cause for pessimism and despondency. A man should never give up trying, she tells Banarasi, since the future may have in store for him the fruits of meritorious deeds (punya). And she proceeds to give him all the money she had been able to save on her own so that he could set up business again.[2]

Only at one point does Banarasi seem to make karma responsible in a matter where he should have looked into his own

1 It should be noted that she does not use the word karma in talking of fate but uses a very different word : 'honahar', literally, 'that which must happen'.

2 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 373–384.

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dispositions. Speaking of his sacrilegious behaviour in the company of other buffooning friends, he comments that it was his evil karma which made him behave so profanely, adding that when the effect of this karma waned, his evil ways, too, mended on their own. He speaks thus, in spite of his realization, clearly expressed earlier, that it was his deeply sceptical and iconoclastic mood that caused him to make fun of religion.

Banarasi uses verse for his narration. This was the common medium for writing in Hindi in his days, whatever the subject matter. It came easily to a practised hand like that of Banarasi, who was capable of a simple as well as a more florid, formal style. In the *Ardhakathanaka*, his language has an easy colloquial flow and an informal tenor of narration. Yet it also has a compactness and economy natural to verse, especially in the well-established doha and caupai meters he uses. Translating his pithy expressiveness into plain, literal prose often makes him sound too bland and stiff, and calls for an explicit articulation where he is effective through suggestive silence. We have sometimes resorted to such articulation.

Translation can never be a matter of a simple one-to-one rendering of the original into another language; this is in any case an impossible task. One realizes this fact with an even greater force when seeking to translate a creative work like the *Ardhakathanaka*, which is vividly rich in evocative and meaningful nuances. Success in such endeavours should be measured by the degree to which a translation is able to recreate the ethos and atmosphere of the original. This is a tricky task and there is no well-tried method or set formula that can guarantee success. Every language is embedded in a specific culture and tradition, which—despite a range of internal variety, a gamut of different

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forms and expressions—imparts to it a certain distinct character of style and usage, and surrounds it with an individual web of suggestiveness. This is why translation is comparatively easier when the two languages concerned share a common culture and tradition. Thus it is simpler to recapture the spirit of the original in translating from one Indian language to another. But the translator's task becomes fraught with difficulties when attempting a translation from Hindi—and old Hindi at that—into English, a language entirely alien in culture and tradition. It is a task in which he can only hope to achieve an approximation of the spirit of the original in the new idiom. And there is no set rule regarding the form, manner and style one should adopt. Success—as well as failure—can be achieved in many ways. There is no such thing as the right translation; different translations can be successful in different ways. The individual translator is, in the final analysis, left to his own judgement, his own devices and sense of form and expression appropriate for his purpose. Different translators translating the same work could quite genuinely choose different paths. We leave it to the critical, bilingual reader to gauge the measure of our own success or failure.

We have translated Banarasi's verse into prose, changing his third person into the first. This, we thought, was more appropriate in modern English. Banarasi, if anything, is natural and unaffected. In English verse, narrated in the third person, his autobiography, in our judgement, would have appeared heavy and forced, creating an unnatural or at best a quaint effect, which would have quite destroyed the spirit of the original.

Banarasi often interrupts his narration with reflective, didactic comments in passages where his language assumes a more conventionally elevated 'poetic' tone, his style becoming consciously formal, metaphorical and rhetorical. We experimented with the idea of putting such passages into verse, but with little success. In our final draft we have mostly eliminated these

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feeble efforts at versification except for a few passages where we thought that prose was quite out of place; for example, in translating the hymn which Banarasi composed to the Tirthankaras during a distant pilgrimage to their shrines, or the flowery encomium to his friend Narottam.

Though Banarasi was aware of the introspective complexity of writing an autobiography, speaking of the breadth of psychological vision it needed and the myriad nuances of detail that were required for any full, pulsating picture, yet in the actual execution of his work he has not been able to muster the literary powers this exacting task called for. His story lacks the intense, intimate appeal, the fullness of impact we have come to expect in autobiographies today. His knowing comments concerning what self-revelation involves, arouse an expectation he does not fulfil and had no intention to fulfil. He tells us at the very beginning of his endeavour that he will relate his story only in gross outlines. At the end, he again remarks that he has given us only a few details about his life, details he could best remember, adding pointedly that he has spoken mostly of his 'outward' deeds, implying clearly that he has left the rich and immense world of feeling and thought largely untouched. Consequently, we come away from his story with an impression of a pervasive sparseness that leaves us dissatisfied, nursing a frustrated curiosity to know more. After reading his story, when we come to the list he appends at the end, of the faults and merits in his character, it comes to us as a revelation, telling us many new, intriguing things about him. Had the earlier, autobiographical picture been more complete, this list would have been, in fact, redundant.

Even in what he chooses to narrate, he often gives us so skeletal a picture that we are left asking questions to which we can find no answers. Take, for example, the story of his love for a prostitute. He gives us no more than an alluring glimpse of his relation with her, sharply arousing a curiosity he never satisfies.

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What we get from him is just a thin trickle of facts, a mere notice of this important episode of his life in bare, minimal outline. We hardly ever get to know the woman whom he loved with such passion that he continued to visit her despite the concerted admonition of his father and the elders of his community. He foments a host of tantalising questions : What did she look like ? What was her life style ? Did she sincerely return his love ? He was just fourteen, how old was she ? What did they talk of when they met ? How did he come to meet her ? How did their relation develop and how did they finally part ? These and many other questions begin to crowd our curious mind, but Banarasi gives us no answers. Indeed, his account is even vague as to whether there was one woman or many.

Later in his story he speaks in impassioned terms of a man who treated him with malice.[1] We never come to know who this man was. Banarasi's account of his enemy remains as covert and opaque as that of his beloved. Both remain for us no more than shadowy figures.

Banarasi had married thrice. His wives never come to life except perhaps the first who acquires some flesh in a single poignant scene where she offers him her life savings. Banarasi affords us in this scene the kind of lively portrature he could have given us had he so desired. But he hardly says anything more about her. His second wife and the third remain mere names, the bearers of his many children, all of whom, to his deep sorrow, died young. We do not come to know them at all. It was not that he was indifferent to them. At the end of his story, speaking ruefully of his childless lot, he describes himself as a leafless, stump. He includes his wife in this description, creating an impression of deep-felt companionship. But, unfortunately, he gives no details of his conjugal life.

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1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verse 451-457.

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His grandmother must have been a formidable woman in her own way : suddenly widowed and destitute at a young age, she travelled alone on foot from one end of the North Indian plains to the other, looking for a home for herself and the five-year old Kharagsen, Banarasi's father. Banarasi gives a short description of her meeting in Jaunpur with Tarachand, who adopted her and her son. Even from Banarasi's extremely brief picture, she stands out as a poised, composed young woman, keeping her calm amidst the greatest tragedy of her life : the loss of her husband and all her possessions. In her old age she had, apparently, become overly superstitious and made claims to occult powers : she said she received visitations from the spirit of a sati who revealed to her the future and guided her in times of trouble. She was extremely fond of Banarasi. He reports that she happily distributed sweets when as a young boy he came home with his first earnings. But Banarasi has little to say about her character. He waxes eloquent over her religious beliefs which he considered foolish and deluded, and denounces her in a self-righteous tone for her perverse faith in what he thought to be false gods. But he has nothing much to tell us of the human aspects of a woman who loved him deeply and who must have been a strong, powerful character and a great moulding force in his life.

He gives us a somewhat fuller portrait of the men in his story His father and his close friends, particularly Narottam, who was also for years his business partner, come out a little more vividly from his pen. But it is in painting episodic scenes that he really excels. His lively narration of travel adventures is refreshingly spiced with a fine sense of humour and never lags for want of incident or interest.

He was also capable of portraying his inner life with puissant sensitivity when he wanted to, calling up with a poet's imagination, pithy metaphors pregnant with expressive force. But though we might feel that he had the ability and fluency to give more

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flesh to his tale, this he has not done. One reason for his weak, insufficient articulation was perhaps the fact that he was writing in what might be termed a 'literary void' : there was no model to set a richer, more satisfactory ideal, no tradition to help him shape his vision and guide him in giving it form.

His own work, one might expect, would have served as a model for future efforts at autobiography, a pioneering example, at least for the Adhyatmis, many of whom were active writers and followers of his example. But though the *Ardhakathanaka* seems to have been read with interest and devotion among a growing number of Banarasi's followers over the generations, no one was inspired to a similar literary effort.

All we have is one curious little tract called the *Jivan Patrika* written by a man who was converted to Terapanth under the influence of Todarmal. We have cited this work earlier in connection with Terapanth history. Raimalla's *Jivan Patrika*, as the name suggests, is in the form of a letter written to friends telling them of his wanderings in search of men who could reveal the secret of Jain scriptures. It covers barely six pages of print and can hardly be called an autobiography by any stretch of imagination. Yet it is told in the manner of a life story and has some semblance to an autobiography. A strangely odd feature of Raimalla's account is that he begins his life story from unexpected beginnings : the nine agonising months he spent in his mother's womb.[1]

We have used Shri Nathuram Premi's excellent 1957 edition of *Ardhakathanaka* for our translation. This edition carries extensive notes and comments, embodying much original research and fine scholarship. This work is foundational for any understanding of Banarasi. Nathuram gives profuse information, patiently acquired, concerning many aspects of the text and its author. Our

1 *Jivan Patrika* is given in Appendix I of Bharilla, *Pandit Todarmal : Vyaktitva aur Kartrtva*, Jaipur, 1959, pp. 332-336.

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debt to his work is immense and obvious. The original text of the *Ardhakathanaka* appended at the end of our work is also largely based on the text given by Shri Premi. Another Appendix carries extracts in English from the *Yuktiprabodha* of Meghavijaya. It deals with an important aspect of Banarasi's life and activity, serving as a complement to Banarasi's career and filling a gap in his story where the author himself chose to remain silent.

The importance of Banarasi's autobiography as a historical document is undeniably immense. But it is also a sensitive human document, and our attempt has been to translate it with this idea in mind. An English translation of the *Ardhakathanaka* has already appeared in the scholarly journal *Indica* of the year 1970. It covers two issues of the months of March and September (Volume 7, Nos. 1 and 2).

Our translation is followed by a commentary designed to provide historical or background information and to ponder over questions of interpretation and significance. It is arranged in a verse-wise sequence.

Ganesh Pyne has graciously agreed to illustrate Banarasi's text with his delicate but vibrant sketches. They are inspired in their pictorial style by the Indian miniatures of Banarasi's days, yet sustained by a modern texture and vitality. He has undertaken the project not merely as a routine assignment but in the spirit of a painterly challenge to interpret the Mughal miniature in a modern idiom. We hope that Pyne's forceful drawings will alleviate some of Banarasi's starkness by bringing to it a visual ambience which will add to the total impact of the narrative.

Every author knows that behind his attempt lies the effort of many. I owe, however, a special note of gratitude to certain friends and colleagues who have been singularly helpful. Shri D. R. Mehta, Secretary, Prakrit Bharati, prompted the endeavour

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and has been a constant source of friendly advice and exhortation over the long period it has taken me to complete the work. Vinay Jain, to whom the book is dedicated, has helped in giving shape to the work at every stage of its progress, from research and writing to proof-reading and indexing. Without him the book would not have been possible. Dr. V. S. Bhatnagar, Reader in History, University of Rajasthan, and an expert in the field of medieval studies, painstakingly read the manuscript, offering constructive criticism and augmenting the argument at many points with erudite suggestions. Shri Vinay Sagarji, with his encyclopaedic knowledge of Jain doctrines and texts, could always be relied upon for information or clarification concerning Jain lore and literature. The *Yuktiprabodha*, excerpts from which have been translated at the end of the work, was kindly lent to me by him from his personal collection of rare Jain texts. Mrs. Francine Krishna of the Dept. of English, University of Rajasthan, carefully went through my translation, improving the language and touching up the style.

A word about spellings. It has not been possible to use transliterations in the main body of the text, although they have been utilised in the footnotes. Names, still common, have been spelt as in current usage to prevent them from appearing strange and unfamiliar. Verse numbers have been provided by the side of the translated text. Unless otherwise stated, all references to the *Ardhakathanaka* are to the 1957 edition of the text edited and annotated by Nathuram Premi.

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Half a Tale

1 A devout slave
I bow to my Lords Parsva and Suparsva
Paying homage
With palms folded on my forehead.

Two rivers Varuna and Asi meet the Ganga.
The celebrated city they enclose is Varanasi
Also called Kasi
For it lies in the Kasiwar district.

Two Tirthankaras, Parsva and Suparsva
Were born in this city.
Here they revealed the good, the siva path.
Men thus call the city Sivapuri.

These are the true reasons
Why the city bears different names.
Those who give another explanation
Speak the tongue of falsehood.

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half a tale/2

My name is Banarasi, a name which carries the stamp of the city that gave birth to two Tirthankaras. I will now relate to you the story of my life because it occurred to me that I should make my history public.

I will speak of my life from my early childhood to the present, describing what I saw and experienced; and to this narrative I will also sometimes add things I have heard from others. In this manner, I will relate the events of my past in broad outlines, but the future I do not know; only the All-knowing can know that.

I will narrate my story in the common language of middle India (madhyadesa), freely revealing all that lies concealed. And though I will speak to you of my virtues, I will also disclose my sins and follies.

Listen attentively friends as I unveil my past.

I am a Jain belonging to the clan of Srimals, who were once princely Rajputs living in Biholi, a village near the town of Rohtak in the region known as Madhyadesa of our good land of Bharat. These Rajputs were converted to Jainism under the influence of a great teacher, and, giving up their earlier life of violence, they took to the practice of wearing a mala, a garland, inscribed with the true mantra; hence they came to be called Srimals. My ancestors bore the gotra-name Biholia, for they had once been defenders of Biholi.

As my family tree beginning with these early ancestors is tediously long, it would be pointless to pursue it in detail. Let me, therefore, begin with Ganga and Gosala, two brothers who came and settled in Rohtak. One of their descendents was Basta, a man still remembered with esteem. Of Basta was born Jethmal, and of Jethmal, Jindas.

Muldas, my grandfather, was Jindas' eldest son. He was a man of means and influence. He was also well educated, having studied both Hindi and Persian. He was shrewd and enterprising

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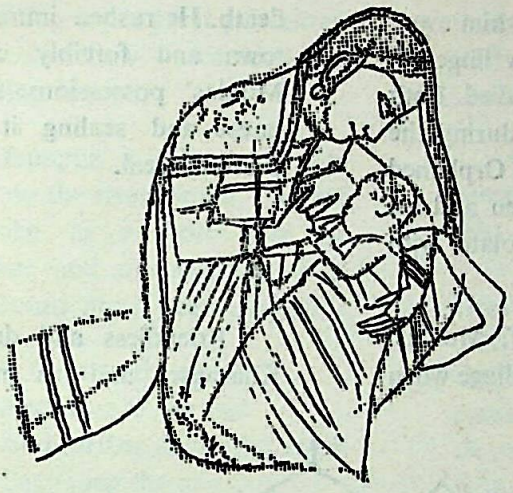

and rose to become the modi of a Mughal chief, with whom he moved to Malwa, a happy and prosperous region.

Muldas' employer was an important amir serving and soldiering under Humayun. This amir had his jagir in the pleasant city of Narwar in Malwa and here Muldas came to live and work. Having his employer's trust, he conducted a profitable business of money-lending on his behalf.

In the year 1608 of the Vikram era (A.D. 1551),[1] a son was born to Muldas. This event took place in the month of Sravana on the fifth day of the waxing moon. Muldas was overjoyed and spent great sums in celebrating the happy event. The new-born was named Kharagsen.

Two happy years went by. Another son was born to Muldas and was given the name Ghanmal. The new-born was very dear to his parents, but his life was cut short at the tender age of three. His parents were desolate like a pair of denuded trees suddenly exposed to the scorching sun. Ghanmal had been to them like

1 In order to arrive at the corresponding year in the Christian calendar, the reader should subtract 57 from the Vikram year.

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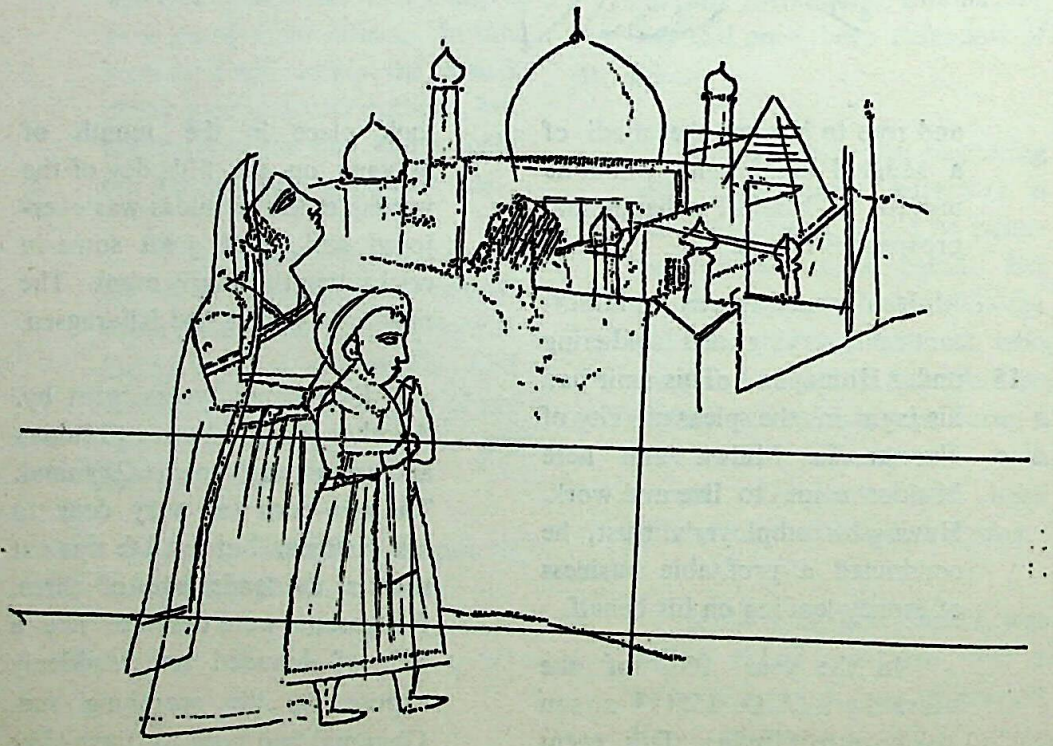
a shade-giving cloud[1] but the wind of time wafted him away unawares. Their sorrow lingered, and then Muldas, too, died. Both father and son died during the year 1613 Vikram. Orphaned and helpless, Kharagsen and his mother were disconsolate with grief.

The Mughal chief, Muldas' master, was away in a village when he received the news of Muldas' death. He rushed immediately to town and forcibly confiscated Muldas' possessions, seizing his house and sealing it with his personal seal.

Friendless and despondent, Kharagsen and his mother left



1 There is a play here on the name of the child, for 'ghana' means 'a cloud'.

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Narwar and set out for the east. Travelling under great privations, they somehow succeeded in reaching Jaunpur.

Jaunpur is a pleasant city built on the river Gomti. Let me describe in a short verse the manner and direction in which the Gomti flows near Jaunpur :

It flows to the south
And then to the east
And further on to the north
Encircling the city
Like a deep defensive moat.

The river with its broad and beautiful banks truly serves to protect the city from three sides. A pathan named Jauna Shah had come to these parts in earlier times and established a settlement. He proclaimed himself king and instituted his authority, naming the settlement Jaunpur and making it his capital. Here he was duly enthroned and assumed the insignia of kingship.

He gave to his capital a firm foundation. Men of all the four castes, including the thirty-six lowly clans called pauni, came to live in Jaunpur. Thus the inhabitants of this city comprise brahmans, ksatriyas, vaisyas as well as these thirty-six clans of sudras.

The city and its suburbs present an attractive sight with tall, imposing buildings, broad, open pavilions (mandapas) and large monastic establishments (mathas). Its roads are lined with magnificent rows of large mansions, spread out in multiple courtyards, their roof-tops fitted with shamianas over which flutter countless gay flags.

Jaunpur is much celebrated for the following things, each numbering fifty-two : it has fifty two parganas (districts), fifty-two shopping centres, fifty–two whole-sale markets (mandi) and an equal number of sarais in its neighbourhood.

Nine kings in succession have ruled over the city. I will recount their names. The first was Jauna Shah followed by Bakkar Shah, after whom came Surhar Sultan. Surhar was succeeded by Dost Mohammad Jan, who was the fourth king to rule over Jaunpur. The fifth was Shah Nizam,

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succeeded on the throne by Shah Ibrahim. The seventh was Shah Hussain and the eighth Gazi Sajjit Sain. The ninth ruler was Sahib Bakhia Sultan, a king with unchallenged power.

The domain of Jaunpur extends to Patna in the east, Etawah in the west, the Vindhya ranges in the south and the river Ghaghar in the north. The history of the town, as I have related it, goes back to the last three hundred years, and is a faithful report of what I have heard from elderly clansmen : I should not be blamed for any untruthfulness in it.

Yet this is but a tale of times long past. Let me return to my own story and tell you what happened after the year Vikram 1613.

In Jaunpur lived Madansingh Srimal, a Jain whose gotra was Chinaliya. He was a jeweller dealing in diamonds and rubies. Kharagsen and his mother enquired after him and arrived at his house. Destiny certainly had a hand in guiding them to Madansingh, who was an older brother of Chhajjmal, the maternal grandfather of Kharagsen. Madansingh welcomed Kharagsen and his mother with open arms and treated them with regard and affection. When he asked Kharagsen's mother how they had come to such straits, she gravely related her tale of woe, speaking of the death of her young son and of her husband, and how she was robbed of all she had by the Mughal chief. She was calm and unagitated as she told her woeful story but Madansingh was moved to tears. He consoled her saying : "Daughter do not grieve. Joy and sorrow alternate like sun and shade. A son, even though an only son, can be a great source of happiness." With these words, Madansingh clasped his daughter and grandson to his bosom and lavished on them fine clothes and ornaments. Mother and son had found a home. Time passed happily and they did not feel its flow. Three years went by in peace and harmony, every day an occasion for joy.

When Kharagsen reached the age of eight he was sent to

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school. He soon learned to read and write and also acquired the art of testing precious metals such as gold and silver for impurities. He became skilful in distinguishing good coins from bad and was efficient in drafting bills for the family business of money-lending, properly noting all the details of a transaction. He knew the right method for keeping accounts, correctly recording sums received and paid out. He began to frequent the market-place regularly and was soon initiated into the trade of dealing in precious metals.

Four years went by and he felt eager to do something on his own.

To the east of Jaunpur is the state of Bengal, which was then ruled by an independent Pathan king named Suleman Sultan. Suleman's brother-in-law was a man called Lodi Khan, dear to the king like a son. Lodi Khan's divan was a Srimal bearing the name Rai Dhana and the gotra Simghada. Rai Dhana was a man commanding great respect. He had five hundred men serving under him as potdars (revenue-

50 collectors), who were all lucky men, busy amassing great wealth. They had the implicit trust of Rai Dhana, who readily cleared them of their dues without demanding an examination of their accounts. Dhana was a deeply religious man given to keeping regular fasts and observing the Jain ritual of pratikramana—a ritual in which a man daily repents for his sins, resolving to abstain from them in the future. Dhana had also taken a pious vow never to build a new house, though he had ample means to indulge in this whim.

Rai Dhana invited Kharagsen to join him, and Kharagsen quietly slipped away from home early one morning with his mother's consent. She also gave him some money as travel expense, but kept the whole matter secret from his grandfather, Madansingh.

Kharagsen took a horse and rode out to meet Rai Dhana, confessing to him the furtive circumstances under which he had left home. The Rai was sympathetic, and gave him cheer and encouragement. Some time

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later the Rai decided to hand over to him the charge of four parganas (administrative districts).

So Kharagsen became a potdar under Rai Dhana. He was given two karkuns to serve and assist him in his work. Kharagsen betook himself to his parganas and diligently began to collect revenue and manage affairs. He dutifully dispatched all sums that he collected to Lodi Khan or the Rai.

He served thus for a period of six or seven months before setting off on a pilgrimage to Mount Samet. A large group of Jains under the leadership of Rai Dhana had been eager for this pilgrimage and Dhana had secured the permission of the Sultan for the purpose. The group journeyed to Samet, where the pilgrims offered worship at the shrine and soon returned. It was evening when they arrived home and Rai Dhana retired to his tent. Taking a vow of silence and of fasting, he sat down for his daily samayika meditations. Rosary in hand, he began to chant the five namokara mantras, when suddenly he was seized by an acute pain in the stomach which caused him to collapse in violent convulsions. A cry of anxiety ran through the camp. But nothing could be done. Rai Dhana gave up his life instantly, before a single word could escape his mouth. His body fell like a crumbling wall and his soul left for another abode.

A traumatic event such as this forces us to reflect upon the transience of all mundane pursuits. Here, now, was a man whose past deeds of merit had won him honour and riches. He possessed hosts of lusty elephants, stables full of horses and carriages, and countless troops of serving footmen. His wealth was ever multiplying. Yet in the final count, all that he had accumulated added upto nothing but a huge, oppressive burden weighing down upon his head. As his worldly ties increased, the man himself lay dead. Like a porter exhausted with ceaseless toil, he suddenly threw away his burden and disappeared behind a wall.

This event caused great turmoil in the neighbouring

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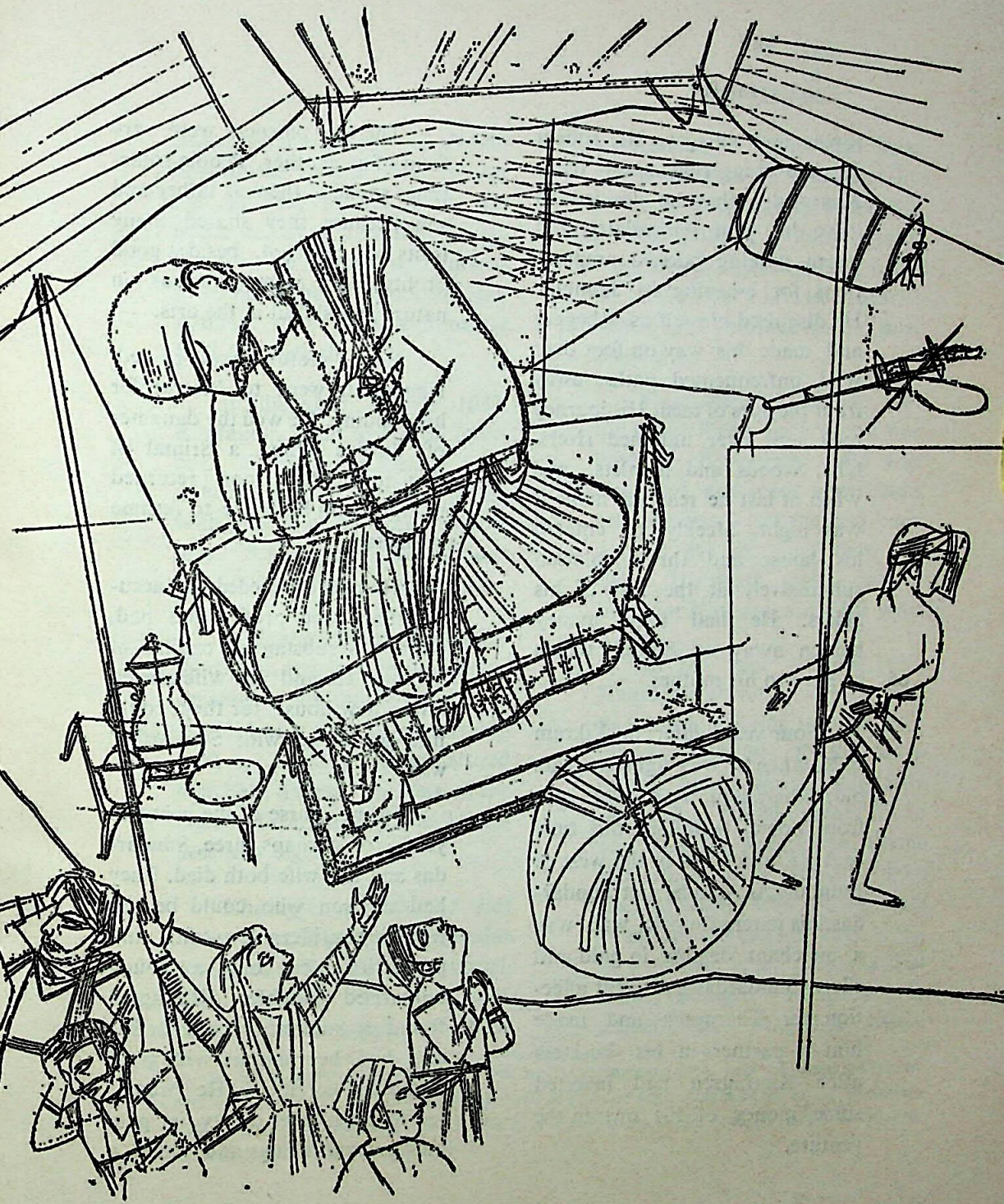

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towns and villages. No sooner did the staggering news reach Kharagsen, that he decided to leave his post immediately and began making hurried preparations for escaping to Jaunpur. He disguised himself as a beggar and made his way on foot over wild, unfrequented paths, away from the eyes of men. His journey took him over untamed rivers, hills, woods and hamlets, and when at last he reached home it was night. Meekly, he entered his house and threw himself submissively at the feet of his elders. He had some money hidden away on himself which he gave to his mother.

Four years later, in Vikram 1626, when he was eighteen years old, Kharagsen again set out from home, travelling this time to Agra, which lies to the west of Jaunpur. At Agra he met Sundardas, his paternal uncle, who was a merchant dealing in gold and silver. Sundardas had great affection for Kharagsen and made him a partner in his business after Kharagsen had invested some money of his own in the venture.

The two partners were very fond of each other. People sometimes spoke of them as father and son because they shared many traits in common, besides good profits. Both were generous in nature and skilful in the arts.

Four more years passed. Kharagsen went to Meerut for his wedding. He wed the daughter of Surdas Dhor, a Srimal of that town, and soon returned to Agra with his bride to resume business.

He had succeeded in accumulating good profits and had, by now, a substantial capital of his own. He and his wife moved into a new house, for they could not get along with Sundardas' wife.

In the course of the next two years, or perhaps three, Sundardas and his wife both died. They had no son who could be heir to their considerable wealth and possessions, but only a young unmarried daughter. Kharagsen found a suitable groom for her and had her married with great pomp and ceremony. He presented to her a large dowry in gold and precious things and called a

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council of five elders[1] to decide how much of the joint wealth that he had shared with her father belonged rightfully to her. He gave her all that was judged to be her father's share, keeping nothing that was legitimately her's for himself.

In the year Vikram 1633, Kharagsen went to live in Jaunpur. He made the journey with a horse and a carriage, taking with him all of his many belongings. A large contingent of foot-soldiers followed him as guards.

At Jaunpur he rested for no more than ten days before setting up shop in the market-place. He established a firm in partnership with a wealthy, good-natured merchant named Ramdas of the Agrawal clan and entered business in a big way.

Kharagsen had hoped that his partnership with Ramdas would be satisfying and fruitful. And, indeed, it was. Both partners were happy with their

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arrangement. They were keen businessmen, temperamentally suited to each other, sharing a genuine sense of mutual regard. They set up an enterprising trade in goldsmiths' articles, pearls, rubies and precious stone dust (chunni).

Time went by happily. In the year Vikram 1635, a son was born to Kharagsen. He was overjoyed and spent great sums on festivities. But the new born did not live for more than ten days. His death was a painful blow for Kharagsen and his wife.

In the year Vikram 1637, Kharagsen travelled with his wife to Rohtak, desiring to offer worship at the shrine of a Sati much revered by his family. The Sati, he hoped, would grant him a son. On the way to the shrine the couple were attacked by a pack of thieves who robbed them of all but the clothes they wore. It was with great difficulty that they managed somehow to return home. They had visited

1 The council is known as *panchayat*. It is not uncommon, even now, among merchant clans and other well-knit traditional groups to call for such councils in order to decide certain disputes or to judge the fairness of a transaction. The council consists of five wise and respectable clansmen.

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the Sati hoping she would give them a son but this calamity was all that the barren Sati had in store for them. Yet the couple did not learn a lesson and failed to realize that they were worshipping a false god. Presently, they set out for the shrine of the same Sati again. Ignorant men cannot see that their beliefs are hollow and vain even if this fact is plainly displayed before their eyes.

Kharagsen soon returned to Jaunpur and resumed his business. His uncle Madansingh was increasingly becoming disinterested in the affairs of the world and soon gave up all material pursuits to lead the life of a recluse, seeking inner peace. He continued thus for three years and then passed away in the year Vikram 1641. The memory of his good, devout deeds is still cherished by everyone.

Two years later Kharagsen's thoughts strayed again to the Sati and he made another journey to her shrine.

In the year Vikram 1643 (A. D. 1586), another son was born to Kharagsen. It was a Saturday, the 11th of the bright half of the month of Magh. The constellation ascending over the horizon at his birth was Rohini. It had covered three-fourths of its zodiacal sign. The moon was in Taurus. The new born was named Vikramjit.

Kharagsen had waited eight years for the birth of this boy. The event, therefore, occasioned much joy and the whole household rang with the propitious songs of young women. Generous gifts were distributed to the poor. Festivities continued in the family for no less than six months, when Kharagsen prepared for a pilgrimage to the shrine of Parsvanatha at Mount Samet. He took with him his son, his family and a large group of kinsmen. They offered worship at the shrine with all the customary rites. Kharagsen's infant son was then placed before the Lord while everyone else stood reverently at some distance, facing the deity with folded palms. The officiating priest bowed to the Lord and made the following supplication:

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"O Lord, this little child, your humble slave, bows at your feet. Show him mercy. Be kind to him and grant him long life, for you are known to protect those who seek your shelter."

With these words the priest sat down, and, assuming the posture for meditation, pretended to enter into a deep trance. He controlled his breath, counterfeiting a profound, mystic silence and remained in this attitude for nearly half an hour, when he turned around and said, "Friends, let me tell you what was revealed to me a moment ago in a dream-like vision. The yaksa-god who attends upon Lord Parsvanatha, the most revered of Tirthankaras, appeared to me in person and spoke thus : 'Fear not for this child,' he said, 'name him after the city where Lord Parsvanatha was born. He will surely have a long life.' With these words the yaksa disappeared."

Kharagsen credulously believed every word the priest had

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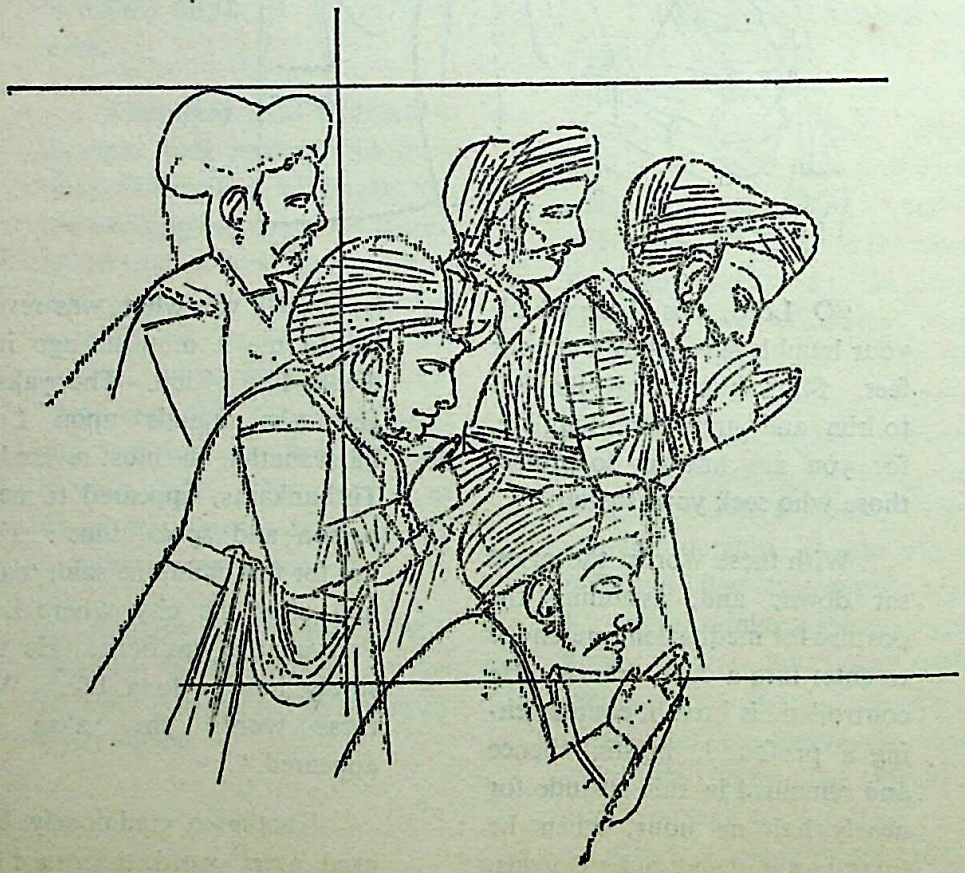
uttered. He and his kin were transported with joy and together they exclaimed : "The city where Parsva was born, and where another Tirthankara Suparsva, too, was born, is Banaras. This boy shall be called Banarasi Das." And so I got a new name, the name I still bear.

I kept good health for the first few years of my life. But in Vikram 1648, the evil karma of my past erupted unawares and I fell sick with sangrahani, an acute and chronic form of dysentry. The doctors tried many cures but the disease persisted for a whole year. Then, suddenly, it disappeared on its own. I kept good health for another year. In Vikram 1650, I contracted



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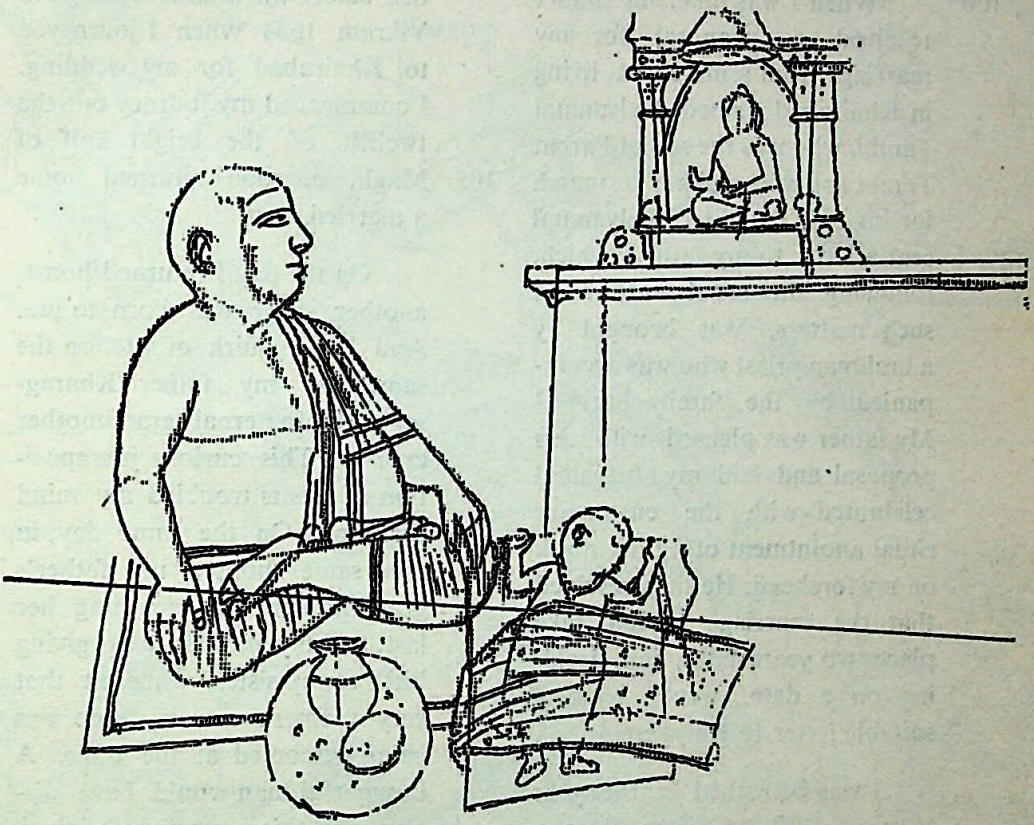

pox, but this disease soon passed away.

In the same year a sister was born to me.

When I was eight I was sent to a school run by a brahman pedagogue. I attended school for no more than a year, within which short time, being quick of learning, I became quite proficient in reading and writing. More schooling was not required of me.

My father Kharagsen was, at this period, very busy running a brisk business in precious stones such as diamonds, rubies and corals (lal).

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When I was nine, my father received a proposal for my marriage from a merchant living in Khairabad named Kalyanmal Tambi, who was the son of Parbat Tambi and was seeking a match for his only daughter. Kalyanmal sent a letter to my father, which, following the usual custom in such matters, was brought by a brahman priest who was accompanied by the family barber.[1] My father was pleased with this proposal and had my betrothal celebrated with the customary ritual anointment of a tilak mark on my forehead. He then resolved that the marriage would take place two years later, and, deciding on a date, wrote back a suitable letter to Kalyanmal.

I was betrothed in the year Vikram 1652. A year later, a great famine befell Jaunpur. Prices soared and no food was available, causing much misery in our whole region.

The famine lasted for quite some time, but it had long subsided before the month of Magh in Vikram 1654 when I journeyed to Khairabad for my wedding. I commenced my journey on the twelfth of the bright half of Magh, and soon returned home a married man.

On the day I returned home, another sister was born to me. And by a quirk of fate, on the same day my father Kharagsen's old maternal grandmother expired. This curious juxtaposition of events troubled my mind for long. On the same day, in the same house, my father's grandmother was breathing her last, and my mother was giving birth to my sister, while at that very moment a new bride was being welcomed at the door. A thoughtful man would have discerned in this a profound irony, the mockery and the wretchedness of life. Only a fool could have remained unruffled.

Two months later, Tarachand Tambi, a paternal uncle of my wife, came to Jaunpur and

1 Every bania family had a priest whose post was hereditary and who performed customary rites and rituals for the family. The practice is still not uncommon. Individual barbers, too, are attached to bania families. An important part of their duties is to act as messengers in arranging marriages.

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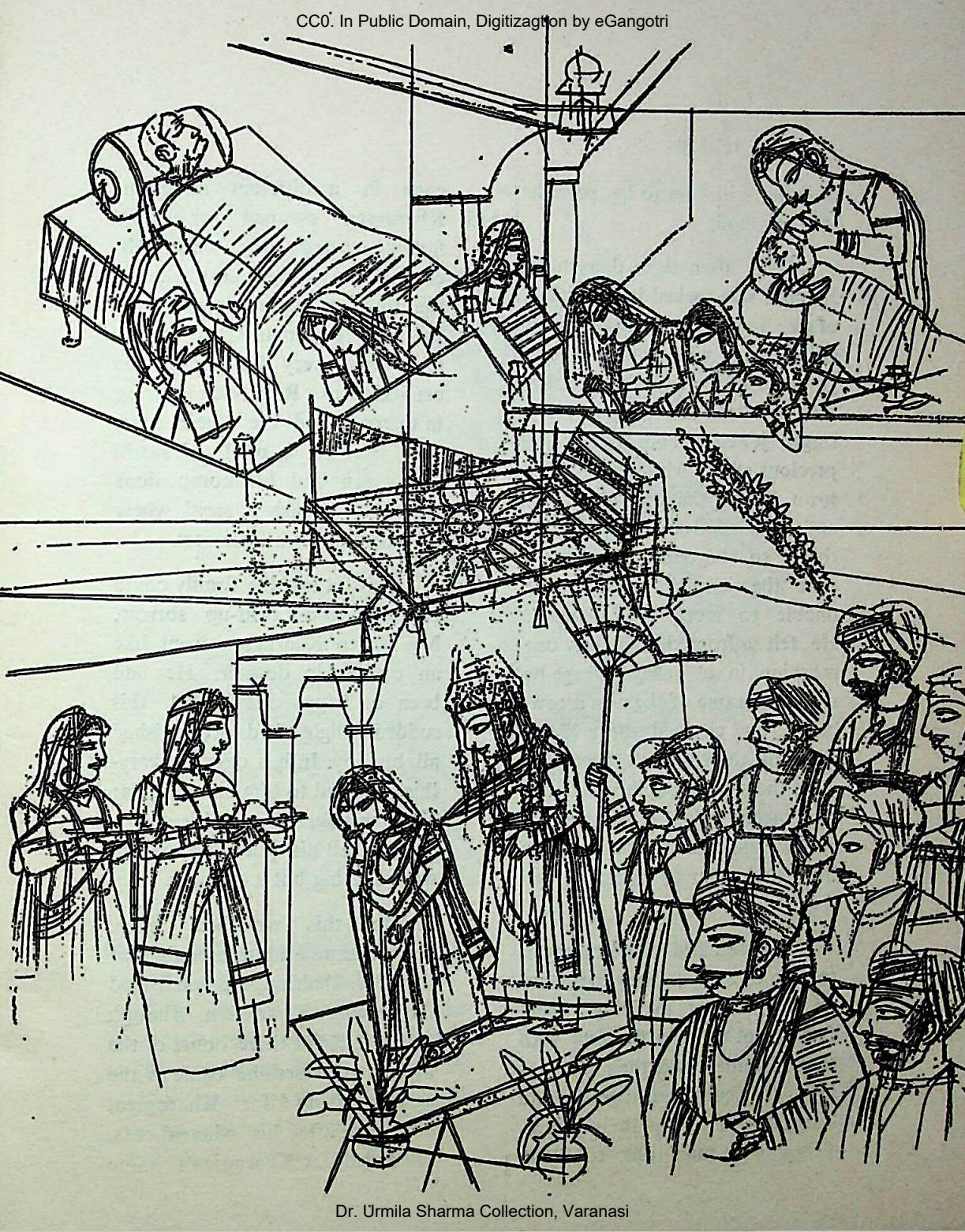

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took her with him to her parents at Khairabad.

Soon after their departure, Jaunpur was rocked by a number of dire and tragic events. Nawab Qilij Khan, who was then the governor of the city, brought his terrible wrath to bear upon every single jeweller and dealer in precious stones who lived in the town. He put them all into prison and demanded of them something so beyond their reach that the jewellers were quite unable to meet the demand. He felt affronted, and early one morning in a frenzy of rage he stood each one of them in a row, bound and chained them like a pack of thieves, and began to whip them with a spiked lash till they nearly died of their agonising wounds. But he spared their lives and allowed them to go free.

The terrified jewellers began to plan of escape. They could see no other way of avoiding a cruel fate except to leave the city with their families and their belongings. They conferred together and hurriedly made up their minds. Every single man took to flight, each in a different direction. Kharagsen escaped with his family towards the west. He crossed the Ganga and reached the town of Shahzadpur, which lies near Karamanikpur. It was night and very dark when he arrived there. Rain was pouring in torrents and the whole town had become a pool of slosh. Kharagsen and his companions managed to reach a sarai where they could take a little rest.

Now at last the family could give vent to its pent-up sorrow. My father Kharagsen wept like an orphan in despair. He had been a happy man, but this sudden blight had extinguished all his joy. In has despair everything seemed to him an affliction; his dear wife, his son, his daughter and all his piled up wealth were nothing but a torment.

In this wretched hour, Karamchand Mahur, a bania who lived in Shahzadpur, befriended the unhappy Kharagsen. Though it was late, for three hours of the night had passed, he came to the sarai looking for Kharagsen, enquiring after his whereabouts. He called out Kharagsen's name

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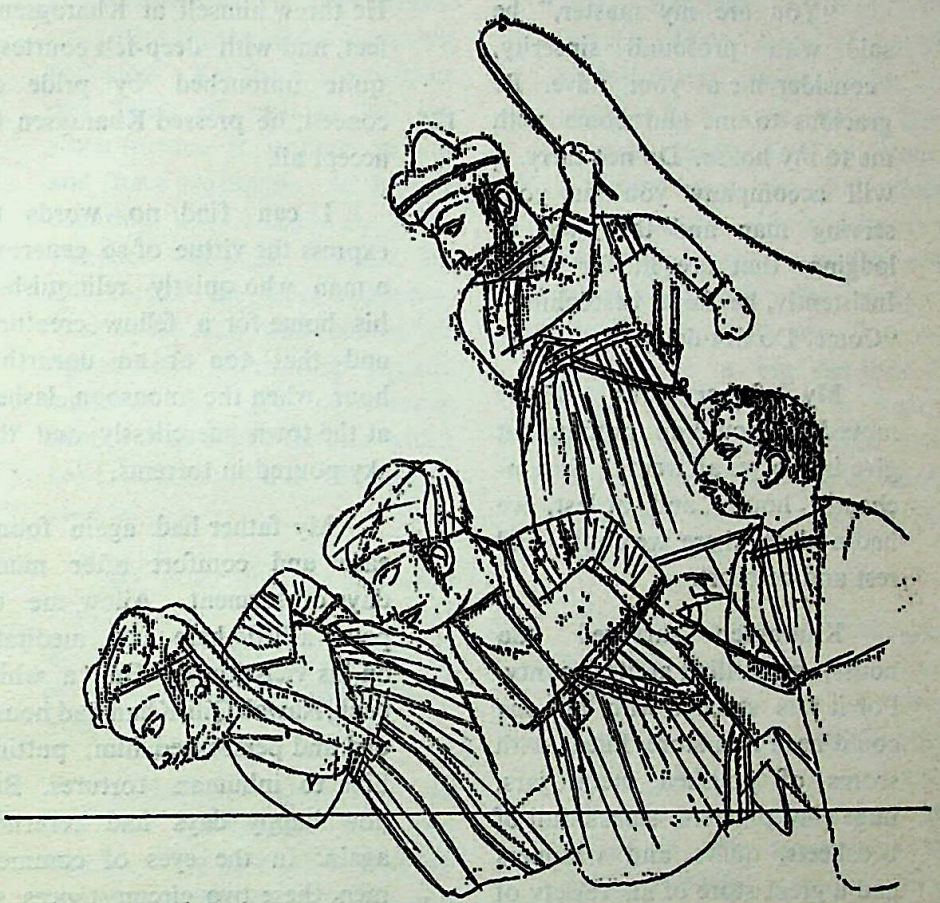

120 repeatedly and finally found him sitting alone, brooding sorrowfully. He sat down beside him with a greeting and invited him to his house. Before coming to the sarai, Karamchand had thoughtfully vacated his own house for the use of Kharagsen and had moved to other quarters.

Kharagsen was extremely loath to accept this altruistic offer. But Karamchand implored with true humility and generosity.

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"You are my master," he said with profound sincerity, "consider me as your slave. Be gracious to me and come with me to my house. Do not tarry. I will accompany you as your serving man and take you to lodgings that are fit for you." Insistently, he kept beseeching : "Come. Do not delay."

My father was deeply moved. He could do nothing but give in. So we all went to Karamchand's house and, at last, we had a place where we could find rest and comfort.

Kharagsen surveyed the house, marvelling at its bounty. For it was stocked with all one could need : a store filled with scores of polished metal jars, huge clay pitchers, stacks full of bedsheets, quilts and wrappers and a great store of all variety of grains and cereals. Karamchand had offered Kharagsen a home that lacked nothing. Deep, indeed, was that man's love and regard for Kharagsen, who, on his part, was very reluctant to accept such lavish hospitality. Stubbornly, he refused, but Karamchand insisted in his own humble way. He threw himself at Kharagsen's feet, and with deep-felt courtesy, quite untouched by pride or conceit, he pressed Kharagsen to accept all.

I can find no words to express the virtue of so generous a man who quietly relinquished his home for a fellow creature, and that too at an unearthly hour when the monsoon lashed at the town mercilessly and the sky poured in torrents.

My father had again found ease and comfort after many days of torment. Allow me to pause a little here and meditate on his vicissitudes. Only a while back, Nawab Qilij Khan had hounded and persecuted him, putting him to inhuman tortures. But now happy days had returned again. In the eyes of common men, these two circumstances, so close in time, may yet seem so utterly different as to have nothing whatever in common between them. But one has just to look at the matter from a slightly different angle to realize that joy and sorrow are, in truth, near kins. Only a man who has known suffering can taste joy;

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and a man who has experienced happiness must also have known suffering. Yet the ignorant man can think of nothing but joy when fortune is smiling on him and times are happy. In days of hardship, he is completely overwhelmed with pain. To him joy and sorrow are utter opposites. Wise is the man who strives for equanimity, remaining equally unmoved by joy or sorrow. Such a man is like the sun which has the same red hue whether it rises or sets.

My father and the merchant Karamchand Mahur became great friends and were seen to seek each other's company at all hours.

Kharagsen continued to live in Shahzadpur for ten months. He then proceeded to the town of Prayag, (also known as Allahabad), hoping that the new place would prove more fruitful for his business, because in those days Prayag had for its governor Akbar's own son Daniyal.

The rest of us remained in Shahzadpur. I had become a small merchant on my own, earning little sums of money selling cowrie–shells. Even this small success gave me a great sense of pride and confidence. I handed over the small profits I made to my old grandmother. She was extremely gratified with my achievement. She made the day she received my first earnings into a big occasion for ritual thanks-giving in honour of Sati Aut, the family deity, distributing sirni, laddu, mukti and other sweets among friends and relations.

My grandmother had great faith in Sati Aut. She firmly believed that I, her grandson, was born because of the Sati's grace. She was an extremely religious woman and was often visited in her dreams by the spirits of Pitris (ancestral fore–fathers) who revealed to her many oracular signs for her guidance. She would repeat words spoken to her by the Pitris, spending endless days and nights pondering over their meaning. Such are the ways of the deluded; yet what can one say to them, these are matters

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which cannot be mended with mere words. As a man believes, so he acts and so he reaps.

Three months later, after thirteen months had passed since we had left Jaunpur, Kharagsen sent us a letter asking us to leave Shahzadpur and move to Fatehpur. I hired two palanquins, four kahars (palanquin bearers) and set out for the new town with the whole family. At Fatehpur I enquired for the quarters where the Oswal Jains had their houses. There we were hospitably received by Bhagvati Sah, a son of Basu Sah. Basu Sah had been in his time a man well-known for his association with Adhyatma—the path of mystic knowledge. A number of his sons were then living in Fatehpur and Bhagvati Sah was one of them. Bhagvati Sah made room for us in his house and I spent many happy and merry days there. Then I received another letter from my father instructing me to join him at Allahabad. I promptly went to meet him. We had met after a long separation and were extremely happy to see each other. The rest of the family remained in Fatehpur.

In Allahabad, my father had succeeded in building up a good business in precious stones. He was also engaged in money-lending and in plying some trade in general merchandise. Four months went by. Fortunes fluctuated, good days alternating with bad. Then my father went to Fatehpur, and I went with him. Our family was now together once again.

Two months later we received good news : Nawab Qilij had been recalled to Agra. We could now safely return to Jaunpur. Other jewellers, too, began to reappear, surfacing like people long lost in the bowels of the earth. Trade resumed its earlier normal rhythm.

This happened in the year Vikram 1656. Things remained normal for one whole year; then suddenly Shah Salim, Akbar's eldest son, appeared on the scene bearing grave trouble. Ostensibly, all he wanted was to come with his party for a hunt to the forest of Kolhuban, which

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lies near Jaunpur. But Akbar was suspicious of his son's avowed intentions. He ordered the governor of Jaunpur to stop Salim from approaching Kolhuban at any cost. Jaunpur, at that time, had a new governor, the younger Qilij Khan, popularly known as Nuram Sultan. Nuram immediately declared emergency in Jaunpur and his army took over the city. All roads leading to Jaunpur were blockaded and a complete halt was put to all boats plying on the Gomti. With its gates securely closed, the fortified city began to make ready for battle : cavalry and infantry could be seen deployed everywhere in large numbers, battalions of guards were stationed at every quarter and the artillery was positioned on the city ramparts, girt for immediate action.

Large–scale preparations were also put under way for a long siege. Nuram Sultan opened the treasury doors and let money flow. Huge quantities of food–grains, clothes and water were stored within the ramparts. Big supplies of guns and other arms, armour and saddles for horses, as well as numerous barrels of wine were quickly collected, and as soon as Nuram felt he was ready, he began to conduct himself like a general on the verge of battle.

The civil population, meanwhile, fearful of a military attack at any moment, took to flight and the city soon became deserted. Only the jewellers, huddled together in a body, still remained in town. They were gravely concerned about their family and kin, but could think of no way out of the situation. They were becoming frantic, not knowing what to do. The town, they knew, was absolutely unsafe, but running away could be just as futile. They were in a painful dilemma and quite unable to reach any decision on their own. Finally they went to meet the governor to ask him for his advice. But Nuram felt as helpless as they.

"I am facing a death trap myself," he said, "Don't ask me for advice. You have to make up your own mind now, for it

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is entirely upto you whether to stay here or to go."

Unhappily, the jewellers returned home, still in a quandary. But, at last, they determined to leave the town and to throw themselves into the hands

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Following the right etiquette in such matters, I called myself the 'slave' of my beloved, always referring to myself as the 'poor one'.

After four months of summer had passed, the weather turned cool. During this pleasant season, two Jain sadhus named Bhanchand and Ramchand came to sojourn in Jaunpur. Both were disciples of a great teacher called Abhaydharma, who was a Svetambara monk of the Kharataragaccha sect of Jainism, a religion which reveals the path of fearlessness. Bhanchand was the more intelligent and knowledgeable of the two. Ramchand was yet a young boy; he still wore the attire of householders, such as novice sadhus do. Devotees of the sect to which they belonged often came piously to visit these two. I, too, followed the custom of my community and went to see them at the upasraya, a religious building where Jain sadhus stay. I became friendly with Bhanchand and my attachment to him grew so much that I spent all my days in his company, often returning home quite late at night. With him I began earnestly to study the sacred texts of Jainism. I studied a large number of works including hymns to various Tirthankaras, hundreds of well-known verses on different religious topics and a treatise on the proper ritual for bathing a Jina image. I also studied texts dealing with samayika meditation and penances for sin. Besides Jain texts I also studied lexicons and works on prosody. An important work I studied was the famous *Srutabodha*. Another was the *Chandakosa*. I was a diligent student and spent much time memorising texts and reciting them with the right enunciation. I had become quite religious and did my best to acquire the eight merits of a good Jain.

I also began to write and commenced work on a book called *Pancasandhi* dealing with an important aspect of Sanskrit grammar. But I was still leading a dual life. Though I was fully devoted to the task of acquiring knowledge, yet I did not give up my amorous pursuits. I composed a book of poems containing a thousand verses with love as the central theme, though, ostensibly, the book was about all the major human sentiments,

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which have been classified as the nine rasas. Reflecting back, I realize that I had become a false poet, an author of words and sentiments expressing falsehood.

Devoted thus entirely to my two consuming passions, I was doing nothing to earn money. I was so lost in the labours of love and learning that often I even forgot to eat my meals. Where then was the time for thinking of paltry things like money ?

I spent two whole years in this state of abandon, despite severe admonitions from my parents. By Vikram 1659, however, I was satiated with books and amour. I now set out to fetch my bride from her father's home. I put on all my finery, and attended by a livery of servants, travelled happily in a palanquin to Khairabad, the home of my father–in–law.

I was now fifteen years and ten months old. After a month in Khairabad, I suddenly fell sick with a disgusting disease caused by a morbid condition of the windy humour (vata).[1] The skin all over my body became like that of a leper. My very bones ached and my hair began to fall. Innumerable eruptions appeared all over my arms and legs and soon I was so unsightly that people shunned my company. My father–in–law and my brother–in–law refused to sit with me at meals. I was so repellant that none wanted even to come near me. My sins were bearing fruit once again.

My wife and my mother–in–law tended me : they fetched me food and water and fed me with their own hands. Regularly, they applied ointments to my limbs; but so foul was the stench from my body that they had to hold their nose all the while that they attended to my needs.

It was a barber who finally cured me. He prescribed medicines which proved to be effective,

1 Indian medicine, like Greek and pre-modern European medicine, believed that the human body was made up of different humours. These were three in number : vata (wind), pitta (bile), and kapha (phlegm). When the humours were well-balanced, the body was healthy. The malfunctioning of any humour caused disease, different diseases being the result of disturbances in different humours.

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keeping me entirely on a salt-free diet consisting mainly of parched grams. I began to recover by slow degrees, and after four months had passed, my disease showed definite signs of subsiding. In another two months I was totally cured.

I had often offered money to the god–sent barber but he had always refused to accept anything from me. Now that I had regained health, I felt I must recompense him somehow. I called him and honoured him greatly, and addressing him as a dear friend, showered him with many suitable gifts, which he now accepted. I was happy to send him home satisfied. After I had regained health, I remained in Khairabad for another ten days, and then set out for home in a palanquin. I travelled alone, for my parents–in–law did not let my wife accompany me.

As soon as I reached home, I fell at the feet of my father. My mother could not bear the sight of my emaciated body. She beat her breasts and cried out in anguish like the kurari[1] bird.

My father was utterly ashamed of me. He shouted foul abuses at me, raging with such fury that I was left totally dumb, unable to do anything but cry. For a few days I felt completely dejected and disgusted with myself. But soon I went back to my old ways and began to frequent the upasraya, plunging myself ardently into both my passions, learning and love.

Four months later, my father went to Patna, and I went once more to my parents-in-law at Khairabad. I stayed there for one month, hardly ever moving out of the house. Not once did I go to the market-place, so miserable was I with shame. Then I returned to Jaunpur, this time with my wife, hiring a palanquin and a horse for the journey.

Back in Jaunpur I had to face the elders of my community, who accosted me gravely with censure and advice.

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1 A sand-brown water bird of the size of a common hen, found near lakes and marshes. Its plaintive call had become a conventional metaphor for a woman's cry of misery.

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"Pay attention son," they said, "to what the old and the experienced have to say. Give up your ways of love, since love is for the darvesh, not for you. Give up your foolish pursuit of learning, since learning is only for brahmans and bards. A merchant's son should tend shop. Do not forget that a man who is too studious has to beg for his food."

The elders vent all the eloquence at their command to bring me round to their way of thinking and make me see where my self-interest lay. But it was all in vain. Their advice was entirely wasted on me. I continued to devote myself to the two pursuits which had for me an inherent, spontaneous delight: I kept up my studies with Bhanchand at the upasraya, and I persisted in my amorous liaison, becoming ever more committed to it. It is wrong to think that men can be swayed by the words of others; we only acquire convictions that are in accord with the stirrings of our heart.

Thus was I living out my destiny. Impelled by karma, I pursued my passions till the year Vikram 1660.

Let me here briefly relate some major events that occurred during Vikram 1660. It was during this year that my father Kharagsen returned to Jaunpur from Patna. He arranged a marriage for his eldest daughter, meeting the expenses of the wedding with the money he had kept concealed underground. A daughter was born to me, but she lived only for a few days. I fell ill and was advised to observe long fasts, during which I often became so unbearably hungry that I would pitiably cry out for food, which was, of course, denied to me. One day my craving for food became so overpowering that I begged to be allowed to feast my eyes on a piece of roti (Indian bread) even if I could not eat it. Two big and thick rotis weighing half a pound each were given to me and I hid these under my cot. Later I ate them secretly. This clandestine feast, curiously enough, cured me of my illness. My unheard of cure aroused much curiosity and wonder among the people around.

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My father had, during this year, entered into an extremely venturesome deal, which caused him great anxiety, but luck was with him and he earned hundred-fold profits. The household rang with the sound of lively, festive gaiety.

Allow me here to go back to the year Vikram 1659 and confess to a humiliating episode which occurred that year during the monsoon month of Sravana, when I chanced upon a deceiving sanyasi who made a complete fool of me. This sanyasi told me that he knew a magic mantra, which, if uttered properly for a period of one year, would turn into a source of great riches. The mantra was to be uttered daily with unswerving faith in the complete secrecy of the privy for a period of twelve full months. It was not to be divulged to anyone. The man who persevered in this practice, the sanyasi assured me, was sure to be rewarded by a gold dinar on his door-steps the day after the end of a year, and would, thereafter, continue to receive a dinar in a similar manner every day for one full year. The practice could then be repeated with the same results. I was taken in by the beguiling words of the false sanyasi, who struck me as a great sage, an adept in occult mysteries. My greed was aroused. I fell at the man's feet and begged him to tell me the mantra. The sanyasi taught me the mantra, writing it down for me on a piece of paper. I was fool enough to practise what the sanyasi had taught me for a whole year, adhering religiously to all the constraints he had prescribed. And never did I utter a word about the mantra to anyone.

When the year was over, in Vikram 1660, I went with breathless expectation to my front door and scanned eagerly for the promised dinar. Nothing of course was found. But I clung to my vain hope and the next day I looked again for the dinar. I never found it, not even in my dreams. My greed had led me to grief. I was miserable and I lost my appetite. Finally, I told my sorry tale to Bhanchand. He soothed me, speaking of the futility of beliefs such as I was

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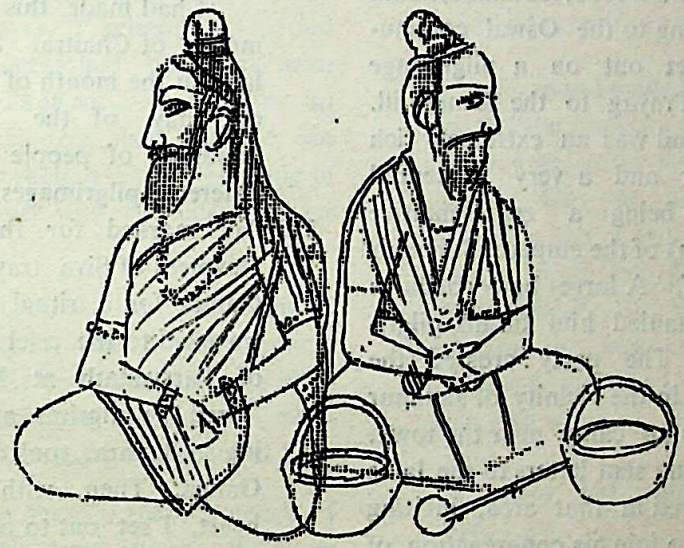
prey to, and the utter falsity of the hopes they inspire. He helped me to regain my peace of mind and my appetite.

A few days later, I was made a fool again by another false yogi. This man gave me a

to worship the idol regularly with great faith and reverence, diligently performing every decreed ritual. Devoutly, each morning, I took my bath before carrying out the puja ritual during which I observed all the forms decreed for the purpose.



small conch–shell with an assortment of articles used in the ritual worship of a deity. He solemnly assured me that the conch-shell was the true image of Lord Siva himself, and he who worshipped it would surely attain Siva's divine abode. I accepted the conch-shell and sincerely began

All the while I muttered the name of Siva a hundred and eight times with joy and elation, never taking my meals before I had performed the full rite. And if, on occasion, I had to miss the ritual for some pressing reason, I felt extremely guilty and repentant. I would, then, as an act of

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penance, partake of only bland, unsavoury food the next day. I worshipped Siva in this manner for a long time, keeping my daily ritual a secret from my family and friends.

On the second day of the bright half of the month of Chaitra, Vikram 1661, Hiranand, a Jain belonging to the Oswal community, set out on a pilgrimage from Prayag to the Samet hill. Hiranand was an extremely rich jeweller and a very influential man, being a representative (mukim) of the emperor Jahangir himself. A large body of Jains accompanied him on his pilgrimage. The party crossed the Ganga in the vicinity of Jaunpur and set up camp near the town. Hiranand sent letters to the Jains who lived in that area, inviting them to join his congregation of pilgrims. Kharagsen, too, received an invitation, and, saddling his horse, went to join Hiranand.

He went alone, leaving us all behind. After he had gone, there was no one to keep a check over me. I became headstrong and unbridled. I, too, had set my mind on a pilgrimage, and plagued my mother to let me go. In a fit of juvenile religious fervour, I took a vow, as many Jains do, to abstain from the enjoyment of a number of things, namely, curd, milk, ghee, rice, gram, oil, betel and certain flowers.

I had made this vow in the month of Chaitra. Six months later in the month of Kartik, on the day of the full moon, hundreds of people set out for different pilgrimages; it was a day marked for the purpose. Devotees of Siva travelled to the Ganga for a ritual bath; Jains travelled to the celebrated shrine of Parsvanath at Banaras. I joined the pilgrims, and journeying to Banaras, took a bath in the Ganga. Then, with a devout heart, I set out to offer worship at the holy shrine of Parsvanath in the town. On the way to the shrine I went to the market place in order to purchase samples of all the articles I had vowed to abstain from, and laid them at the feet of Lord Parsva. I remained in Banaras for ten days, piously offering worship at the shrine of Parsva every morning.

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I became, thus, for a few days, an ardent devotee of a Jain deity. Yet, all these days, and indeed, throughout the journey, I never neglected my daily ritual of propitiating my conch-shell Siva. Never did I take my meals before I had performed its worship. And when my journey was over, I religiously carried the conch-shell idol back with me to Jaunpur. A shell for an idol, I, too, had become an empty shell, a living example of a devotee who was one with his god!

Another son was born to Kharagsen during these months while he was away, but the child did not live for long. I need, therefore, say nothing about him.

In Vikram 1661, a batch of pilgrims from among the large contingent that had travelled earlier to the Samet hill, returned home. Their return journey proved calamitous. Many fell prey to fatal diseases on the way and others became grievously ill. My father Kharagsen had reached Patna when he contracted a serious stomach malady which caused him great suffering. He was, however, destined to live longer and his pain gradually subsided. He awaited the arrival of the main body of pilgrims who had stayed back with Hiranand, and journeyed with them from Patna to Jaunpur. The journey caused him great pain and he took to bed as soon as he returned home.

Hiranand made a halt at Jaunpur at the request of his friends, remaining in the town for four days. On the fifth day he crossed the Gomti, setting up camp in a big park near the river-bank. He proceeded to Prayag the next day, and the pilgrims dispersed, each going his own way.

They bid each other goodbye
Like men
Who have met briefly
On a ferry boat.

My father regained health in a few days and happy times returned again, yet not without their usual share of suffering.

A son was born to me at this time, but he did not live long.

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In Vikram 1662 (A.D. 1605), during the month of Kartik, after the monsoon was over, the great emperor Akbar breathed his last in Agra. The alarming news of his death spread fast and soon reached Jaunpur. People felt suddenly orphaned and insecure without their sire. Terror raged everywhere; the hearts of men trembled with dire apprehension; their faces became drained of colour.

I was sitting up a flight of stairs in my house when I heard the dreadful news, which came as a sharp and sudden blow. It made me shake with violent, uncontrollable agitation. I reeled, and losing my balance, fell down the stairs in a faint. My head hit the stone floor and began to bleed profusely, turning the courtyard red. Everyone present rushed to my help. My dear parents were in utter agony. My mother put my head in her lap and applied a piece of burnt cloth to my wound in order to stop the flow of blood. I was then quickly put to bed with my sobbing mother at my side.

The whole town was in a tremor. Everyone closed the doors of his house in panic; shop-keepers shut down their shops. Feverishly, the rich hid their jewels and costly attire underground; many of them quickly dumped their wealth and their ready capital on carriages and rushed to safe, secluded places. Every householder began stocking his home with weapons and arms. Rich men took to wearing thick, rough clothes such as are worn by the poor, in order to conceal their status, and walked the streets covered in harsh woolen blankets or coarse cotton wrappers. Women shunned finery, dressing in shabby, lustreless clothes. None could tell the status of a man from his dress and it became impossible to distinguish the rich from the poor. There were manifest signs of panic everywhere although there was no reason for it since there were really no thieves or robbers about.

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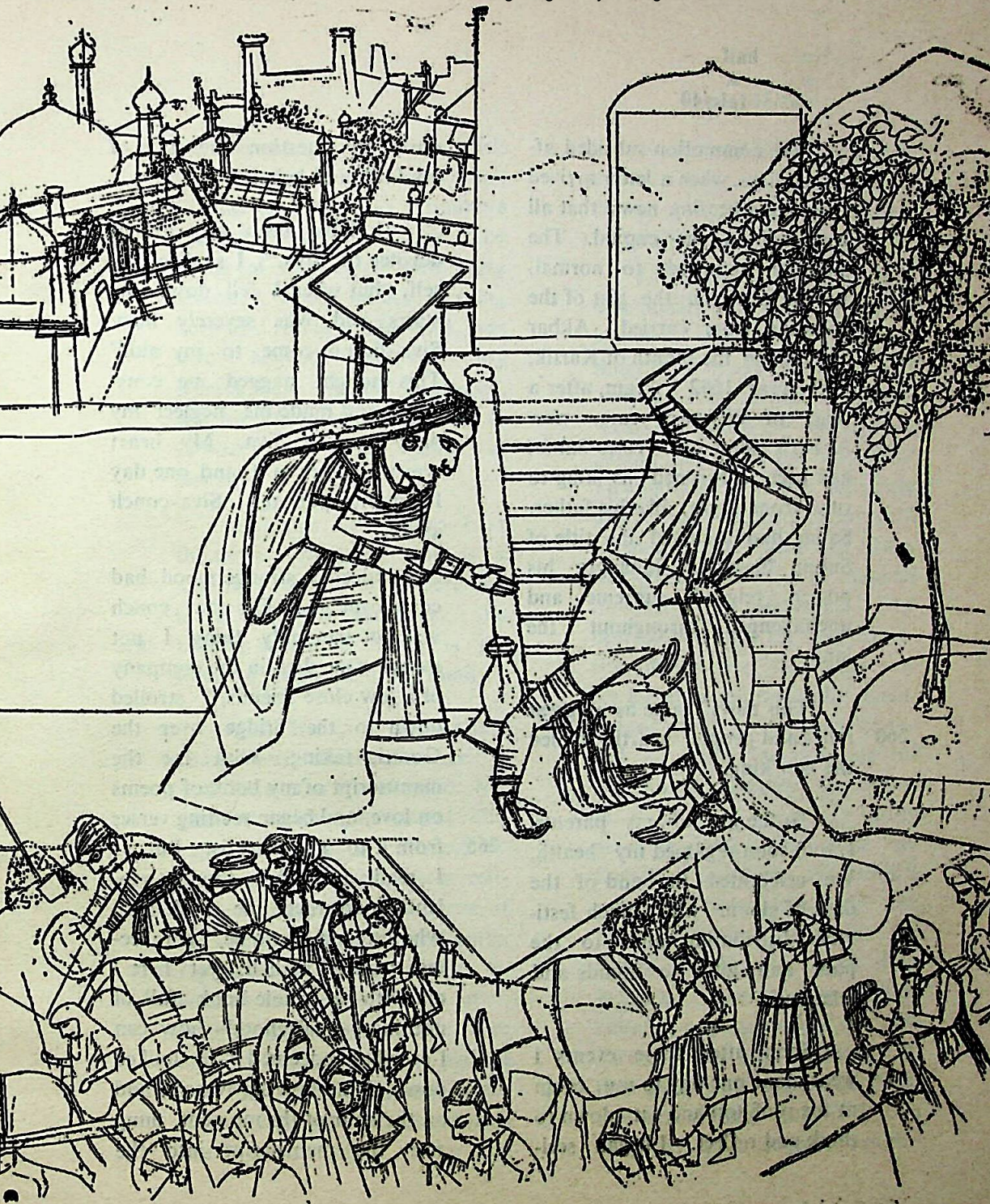

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The commotion subsided after ten days, when a letter arrived from Agra bearing news that all was well in the capital. The situation returned to normal. Let me give you the gist of the news the letter carried. Akbar had died in the month of Kartik, in the year 1662 Vikram, after a reign of fifty-two years; now Akbar's eldest son, Prince Salim, had been enthroned as king to rule from Agra, like his father. Salim had assumed the title of Sultan Nuruddin Jahangir; his power reigned supreme and unchallenged throughout the land.

This news came as a great relief and people heartily hailed the new king.

To the joy of my parents, I, too, soon regained my health. We celebrated the end of the days of gloom with much festivity, distributing alms to the poor and gifts to friends and relations.

Soon after these events I went alone one day to my room at the roof-top and sat down to think and reflect. I began seriously to question the state of my faith and belief.

"I have been an ardent devotee of Siva," I said to myself, "but when I fell down the stairs and was severely hurt, Siva did not come to my aid." This thought nagged me constantly and made me neglect my daily ritual to Siva. My heart was no longer in it, and one day I simply put the Siva-conch away.

Indeed, a strange mood had come over me. For that conch was not the only thing I put away. One day, in the company of a few close friends, I strolled down to the bridge over the Gomti, taking with me the manuscript of my book of poems on love, and began reciting verses from it to my friends. But as I read, a sudden thought violently perturbed me : "A man who utters a single lie," I reflected, "suffers in hell; yet here I am with a whole book full of nothing but falsehood—how can I ever be redeemed ?" I looked down at the flowing waters, and on the spur of the moment, flung away the manuscript into the

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river, as though it was so much waste paper. My friends rushed to stop me from this impulsive act, but the deed was done. The folios of my poems were lying scattered over waters running deep and fearful. The book was now beyond retrieval. My friends were greatly distressed, but all they could do was to lament over the quirks of destiny.

My father was glad to hear the news. "Perhaps this is a sign that my son is undergoing a real change for the better," he happily remarked, "there is yet hope for the future of my family."

And, truly, a remarkable change was coming over me. I was like a man transformed. My mind was turning to moral and righteous thoughts. I sincerely began trying to become a religious man in the true sense of the word. And consequently, I gave up my licentious ways to become an upright family man. Rightly has it been said that no amount of effort can make a man give up his aberrant ways. An impetus for reform always comes from within. As a boy matures, his childishness recedes on its own : as good karma dawns, evil karma slinks away naturally.

I had now become a genuine adherent of the religion to which I was born. The first thing I did every morning was to visit a Jain shrine, not even waiting to brush my teeth before paying homage to the enshrined Tirthankara. I strove diligently to put the precepts of my faith to practice and follow the fourteen prescribed rules of conduct (niyama). I performed the decreed penances for the expiation of sins, and sat religiously for the enjoined samayika meditations which have been designed to instill an attitude of detachment towards the world in a man. I gave up eating green vegetables, for these are forbidden to a Jain, and took a vow never to touch brinjals and other prohibited food for the rest of my life. For eight days in a year I observed the special ritual of paying homage to the Tirthankaras, singing hymns to their glory and imploring them for grace and mercy. I had truly become a devout, faithful

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Jain and spent hours listening to the religious lore of Jainism.

Who could have predicted such a sudden conversion ? Unfathomable, indeed, is the mind of man and none can ever foresee the path it might next choose to follow. I had been a man of ignominous ill-repute, but now my conduct was commended by all.

I have been telling you, so long, of events that occurred before the year Vikram 1664. Let me now give you a brief summary of events that happened in 1664 itself.

I had two sisters. The elder was married and lived in Jaunpur. The younger was still unmarried. My family was anxiously looking for a suitable groom for her. In 1664 she was at last wedded and went with her husband to live in Patna. The wedding took place in the spring month of Phalgun.

Another son was born to me this year, but he, too, did not live for more than a few days.

Like a parrot
He flew away
Leaving behind an empty cage
His lifeless frame.

The next three years were rather uneventful. Time passed with its usual share of joy and sorrow and I continued in my good, reformed ways, causing much happiness to my father.

In Vikram 1667 my father decided to send me on a trading mission to Agra. He purchased a sizeable amount of saleable goods in addition to merchandise he already had in his possession and directed me to take them to Agra to market them as profitably as I could. Taking a piece of paper he drew up a proper list of all the goods he had assembled and set down the price of each article. It was quite a miscellany. Firstly, there were precious stones, loose as well as set in ornaments : I had twenty-four pieces of rubies, nine sapphires, twenty emeralds, thirty-four sundry jewels, four bags of stone-dust (chunni), two bracelets and two finger-rings. Then there was ghee, weighing

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twenty maunds, in addition to two large, leather containers full of vegetable oil, and a good quantity of distinctive Jaunpur cloth. The merchandise had cost two hundred rupees; some of it was purchased with money from my father's stored-up capital and the rest from what he had borrowed.

After the goods had been delivered to him, my father called me and addressed me solemnly with these words : "It is time, my son, for you to take over the burden of our family on your shoulders. So be careful with your merchandise and do your best to earn enough for the needs of us all." He then put an auspicious tilak-mark on my forehead and sent me on my way to Agra.

I had hired a cart to carry the more heavy and bulky articles, concealing the jewels, gems and ornaments on my person, in the folds of my dhoti where it was tied securely at the waist. I journeyed in the company of a number of other merchants who were also travelling with their carts in the same direction. Our caravan covered a distance of five kos[1] a day and in due time we reached Etawa where we made a halt at the outskirts of the city on a large, flat, open piece of land, parking our carts in a close circular formation. Soon it was dusk. Big, black rain-clouds suddenly gathered in the sky and rain began to pour heavily. All of us ran for shelter. I covered myself with a thick woolen blanket and made towards the sarai. But there was no room in the place. Two noblemen (amirs) from the court were in occupation of the entire premises. I hurried from there to the market-place. But the shops, too, were already occupied by others. I looked frantically for a house where I could seek shelter, but all doors were closed. I was becoming faint with fatigue yet I could find none willing to offer me room for the night. A woman was kind enough to ask me to come into her house, but her husband chased me away with a thick bamboo stick. It was a cold

1 One kos is about 2 miles.

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dark night, for this was the winter month of Agrahayana and my feet were heavy with the gluey mud on the roads

I was wretched and had nowhere to go. At last, in desperation, I proceeded to the city gate. Outside the gate there was a small hut occupied by some sentries. I had two other Jains with me; the three of us approached this hut and pleaded with the sentries for shelter. The sentries demanded to know who we were, and we told them that we were merchants travelling with a caravan looking for shelter for the night; we added that we had searched all over the town in vain and now had nowhere to go. We beseeched them to take pity on our plight and give us room for the night. The sentries were moved to kindness and asked us to enter the hut, saying that they would be leaving soon and we could have the hut to ourselves for the night. But they warned us that we would have to face a little problem in the morning when accosted by the city authorities, and only a good bakshish[1] would help us out. We agreed to this condition, happy at last to find a roof over our head. I fetched some water, washed my feet and hung my wet clothes to dry. We then spread some hay on the floor and the three of us lay down to sleep. We had hardly been able to close our eyes when a hefty, grim-faced man appeared on the door of the hut and demanded that we get out of the hut; he claimed that it was his property.

"You cannot stay here," he shouted angrily, "this is my hut. I sleep here on my cot every night. If you do not get up and leave immediately, I will give you a good whipping and drive you out forcibly."

Terrified, we got up instantly, and, collecting our things, trudged out into the rain once again. But as he watched us walk away wearily, the man took pity on us and called us back to him. He spread a mat made of jute on the floor and put his cot on it.

1 Literally 'bestowment', a tip or a small bribe.

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"I cannot sleep without a cot," he said, "but you may sleep on the mat under the cot if you like."

We had no choice but to accept his grudging offer. No man can escape his karma; how could we ? As we sow, so we reap, and everything is impelled by karma. The cloth we weave is made of the yarn we have spun ourselves.

And so our rough intruder slept on the cot while we ill-fated travellers slept under it. But fortunately we were able to sleep soundly as the blankets we carried kept us warm. As soon as it was morning, we returned to our carts. The rain had stopped and our caravan could be on the move once again.

Finally, we reached Agra. It was raining the day we arrived there and the roads were slippery with mud. Now travelling alone, I crossed the river and went into the town, leaving my bales of cloth and the drums of oil and ghee behind on the other bank. I wondered where I should stay and with whom. I decided to go to Bandidas, who was my younger sister's husband, for as the saying goes, there are two categories of men on whom one can always rely, namely, saints and close relatives.

Bandidas lived in Moti Katla near the house of Champsi, a well-known citizen. He welcomed me warmly and expressed concern about where I had left my bales of cloth and my drums of oil and ghee. I told him I had stored them safely in the premises of a business firm (kothi)[1] across the river.

After a few days I rented a place of my own and fetched my bales of cloth there. I then began to visit the market-place daily, and within a few days succeeded in selling my entire stock of cloth. But when I drew up the final accounts, I discovered that I had been a loser because, after deducting interest, the money that I had made turned out to be less than the original outlay.

1 Literally, 'a house', 'kothi' is the Hindi term for a business firm. The word is also used, as in this case, for the premises where the firm has its offices.

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One day, soon after I had sold my stock of cloth, I crossed the river to the other bank where my stock of ghee and oil was stored. I sold my entire stock of both these commodities, making a profit of four rupees. The hundi[1] against which my father had borrowed money earlier in Jaunpur had now fallen due. I received it and paid out the required sum.

Now that I had sold my bulkier goods, I ventured to sell my gems. I was proving to be a poor businessman. Indiscriminately, I handed over articles to people purely on trust, without finding out whether the man I was dealing with was really trustworthy. Many dealers took advantage of this misplaced trust and never came back to pay me for the things they had taken. Some even misused my jewels as a pledge to borrow money for their own purpose and never paid me anything at all. I was utterly naive and untutored in the devious ways of the Agra market. My deals miscarried and I began to lose money heavily.

I also lost money through sheer bad luck. One day, when I was out in the town, the string with which my pajama was tied to my waist suddenly broke. I had concealed a necklace of pearls as well as my entire stock of loose gems in the fold made for the string; all my precious articles fell out and were irretrievably lost. I also lost my rubies in a similar manner. I had kept them tied to the string of one of my pajamas which I left hanging on a clothes-line in my room. Some rats gnawed away at the pajama-string in my absence one day and made away with my rubies. I suffered these grave losses silently, never speaking of them to anyone.

But this was not yet the end of my losses. I had still more to suffer. I have said earlier that in my stock of jewellery there was a pair of gem-studded bracelets. I sold these and received a reasonable price for them; but a

1 A bill of exchange or a promissory note. Here it denotes the latter. In traditional business practice the borrower makes out a hundi to the lender for the sum stipulating the agreed interest and the period within which the money is to be repaid.

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revenue collector appropriated the money and I had to write it off as a dead loss. I had now only one costly article left: a jewelled finger-ring; I managed to lose this too. I dropped it somewhere while I was tying it with a knot to a piece of string. Now I had nothing left but odds and bits of paltry things: an insignificant quantity of gold and silver, a bundle of cloth and two angarkhas (men's upper garments). The evil karma of my past had come to afflict me with a vengeance. In addition to my other travails, I fell ill, running extremely high temperature. I began to fast and ate nothing whatever for ten days. Then I took to medicines, keeping myself on a restricted diet. It was long before I regained health. I had been unable to visit the market-place for a whole month.

All these days I had been receiving numerous letters from my father, but I had not dared to write to him anything at all about myself. However, he came to know of my ill-fortunes through my brother-in-law, Uttamchand, the son of Dulah, and the husband of the elder of my two sisters. Uttamchand was at that time living in Agra and practising trade in precious stones. He wrote back home saying that I had lost all my money and had become a pauper–an act not expected of a friend. This news travelled fast to my father in Jaunpur, who was hurt to the quick and began to lament his fate bitterly. He rushed home and told my mother the whole miserable story, blaming her and railing at her for what had passed, charging her with having insisted on sending me on this luckless venture.

"Did I not tell you even then that this boy will return home a beggar?" he raged. "Alas, my words have come unfailingly true. Our shameless son has at last ruined us. He has cut us at our roots. We have now nothing left with which to do business ever again." He vituperated against me relentlessly, calling me names till his breath became heavy with unbearable despair. When he had done with his shouting, he had

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my wife packed off to her father in Khairabad.

Meanwhile at Agra I was trying to squeeze a living out of the little I had left. I sold my silver and gold and every little thing I still had, and was finally left with no more than a few coins. I stopped visiting the market-place; in fact, I stopped moving out of my room at all.

But I spent my evening singing and reciting poems. A small group of about ten people used to visit me regularly and to them I sang *Madhumalati* and *Mirgavati*, two narrative ballads on love. My visitors greatly enjoyed my singing and conversation.

My evenings were thus spent pleasantly, though I was so miserably poor that I had nothing to eat the next morning. One of my regular visitors was a halwai who sold kachauris—a kind of stuffed, salted pancake. I bought large quantities of kachauris from this man's shop on credit. If I ever moved out of my room, it was to go to his kachauri shop,

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for I was subsisting on these kachauris, eating nothing else. I ate kachauris for all my meals, breakfast, lunch or dinner; often eating them cold or even stale. My halwai friend was unaware of my true circumstances. But one day, when I was alone with him, I told him all, confessing that I had no money left with me and that I even owed a lot. I warned him not to give me any more kachauris for he might never get his money back.

The halwai was a kindly soul. He gave me leave to eat kachauris worth twenty rupees from his shop, assuring me that he would not bother me for money. We kept this agreement a secret. None of my other visitors came to know of my true state of affairs. My evening sessions continued. The rest of the day I spent alone, with none but myself for company.

I lived for over six months in this manner. Then, suddenly one night, Tarachand Tambi, son of Parbat Tambi and a brother of my father-in-law, appeared at my place. Without a word he sat down unobtrusively in the company of my other visitors. Only when everyone had left did he address me and

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his words were full of love and regard. He invited me to his house for lunch the next day and would not take no for an answer, though I had no mind to go. Next morning he came again to fetch me and implored me, saying that the meal was ready and I should not tarry. He said that I could go later, after the meal, to the market-place for my work if I wanted to.

His invitation was only a ruse to take me to his house. For as soon as I was there, he sent a man to my room to fetch my meagre belongings. He also had my rent, which was long-due, paid. He then implored me to stay with him, and so stubbornly did he insist that I had no choice but to give in.

So I began living comfortably in his house, doing nothing at all for the next two months. Then I ventured into business afresh, this time in partnership with a man called Dharamdas, an Oswal Jain originally from Delhi. Dharamdas was the youngest brother of Jasu and Amarsi, who were flourishing merchants dealing in precious stones.

Dharamdas was the dark sheep of the family. He kept bad company and had acquired many odious habits : he was a spendthrift and overfond of opium. In view of his waywardness we drew up a proper deed of partnership and duly affixed it with our signatures before setting up business. A sum of rupees five hundred was put up as capital by Dharamdas' brothers.

Dharamdas proved to be a good partner for me, and we worked in harmony like two close friends, earnestly building up a modest trade in precious stones. We were busy from morning to night walking up and down the Agra bazar, ever on the lookout for profitable deals. Gradually we set up a brisk trade in rubies, manis and the dust of precious stones (chunni). We maintained proper ledgers of account and always kept them up-to-date, regularly entering our daily transactions in our books. People came to know us and place their trust in us and we began to make enough money for a reasonably good living.

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I had now enough money to repay what I owed my friend, the halwai. The debt amounted to fourteen rupees and I paid it in three instalments. The halwai was happy to get his money back.

I continued with this partnership for two years. Then, becoming dissatisfied with it, I decided to give it up and go to Khairabad. I went to Jasu Sah, Dharamdas' elder brother, and told him of my decision to leave Agra, handing over to him the bag of precious stones that now formed our total asset. Jasu Sah asked me to sell the stones and obtain cash, which I promptly did. I paid him back the five hundred rupees he had invested in the partnership, not keeping a single unearned paisa for myself.

It was in the year Vikram 1670 that I wound up my partnership with Dharamdas, ending it formally, as it had begun, after duly drawing up all the required papers. In the two years that the partnership lasted, I had made over two hundred rupees. But it had all been consumed in expenses, and at the end I had no earnings left. The hard months of toil and effort had come to naught, yielding not even a single cowrie-shell. I had churned an ocean to obtain but a snail. Like the proverbial hing–seller,[1] I sat down quietly to take stock of my gains only to discover that I had foolishly lost all. For a whole year I had danced a mad dance for the sake of money but in the end I was as empty-handed as before.

Yet fortune did grant me a small favour before I left Agra. I was walking down a lane near my home one day, when I espied a small packet lying on the street. I immediately picked it up and quickly walked back home. The packet contained eight pearls, the sight of which thrilled me beyond measure; I felt I had found the magic gem which grants all desire. I had a hollow talisman made for myself and hid the pearls in it. I tied this talisman to my waist, con-

1 Banarasi is referring to a didactic tale or fable popular in his day. We are unable to trace it or learn its details.

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cealing it with great care and caution, and set out from Agra, journeying to the east. Soon I reached Khairabad, where I went straight to my father-in-law Kalla Sah's[1] house.

It was evening when I arrived there, and at night my wife asked me how I had been faring in Agra. I lied to her, giving her the impression that I was doing very well. But she could see through my lies and rebuked me.

"Why do you boast and bluff ?" she said.

I then had to tell her the truth and confessed that I was left with nothing.

"I spent all I earned," I said, "and now I have not a paisa with me."

My wife tried to console me. "God gives man both joy and sorrow," she said. "For you this has been a period of suffering. Happiness, too, will come in its time. Fate must run its course and man must reap the fruits of both his sins and his piety."

All through the night we talked of my life in Agra. In the morning, as I was sitting alone, my wife came to me secretly and gave me twenty rupees, telling me that it was money she had saved for a day of need; it could, she said, be of use to me now that I was having a difficult time.

"Do not despair, my husband," she added, "for if a man lives he can yet achieve everything."

Later, she took her mother aside and told her everything in confidence, adding by way of caution that it was to be kept a secret from everybody.

"O mother," she beseeched her, "as I am your daughter, help me in my need. My very honour is at stake. If you cannot do something within a few days, my husband is sure to leave us and go away. Though he does not utter a word, he is tormented with shame and humiliation."

1 Shortened form of Kalyanmal Tambi.

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Her mother soothed her, telling her not to lose heart. She had, she said, two hundred rupees hidden away in savings which she promised to give me secretly without anyone getting to know a word about it. She advised her to ask me to go again to Agra and begin work anew. My wife thanked her mother profusely, promising that she would quietly try to fathom my intentions that night when alone with me and persuade me to adopt the course of action her mother had suggested.

That night she was very sweet to me and questioned me gently about my future plans :

"What do you want to do now ?" she asked. "Do you want to stay here or are you planning to go somewhere else ?"

"Let us both go to Jaunpur," I proposed.

But she dissuaded me. "Jaunpur is in a turmoil afflicted with a hundred troubles. Why not go to Agra once again ? That is the right place for you at this time."

"But what will I do there without money ?" I protested. "A poor man can achieve nothing. His life is not worth living."

She then gave me new hope with this promise and assurance : "Go buy all the merchandise you need. I will give you the necessary capital."

With these words she went in and brought me the two hundred rupees her mother had given her for me. The whole matter was kept secret from everyone else.

I became infused with new life. With fresh enthusiasm, I launched upon a number of activities all at once. I began to buy quantities of cloth with a view to market it and made arrangements for having it properly washed and cleaned. I also scanned the market for more precious articles such as pearls, rubies and diamonds. I resumed my writing and began work on two books simultaneously, namely, *Ajitanatha ke Chand* and *Namamala*, both in verse.

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I was doing things with a renewed vitality and was able to find time for all my four projects : the writing of two books and the purchase of two different sets of merchandise. Within four months I had completed all my projects. I finished work on the *Namamāla* which contains two hundred verses. I also completed *Ajitanatha ke Chand*. My stock of cloth was duly washed and ready for the market, and I had succeeded in acquiring a good necklace of pearls.

Then, in the month of Agrahayana, on the twelfth day of the waxing moon, I set out for Agra again. This was my second visit to the town, and I carted my goods to the market known as Katla Parvez, where my father-in-law had a trading establishment (hat), deciding to operate from there. Arrangement for my meals was made at my father-in-law's establishment, where I also slept at night in the rooms used as the office. Every morning I went to the market-place, trying to find a buyer for my things. But this proved to be a difficult proposition, for the cloth I had was of inferior quality. I sweated a good deal, running about in search of good

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buyers, but failed to find any. Alas, I was still a stranger to the ways of fortune !

But I made a remarkable profit on the sale of my pearl necklace, earning as much as thirty rupees in that single transaction. The price I sold it for was a full-three quarters in excess of what I had paid for it. I had bought it for forty rupees and sold it for seventy. This success convinced me that profits were to be had only in gems and precious stones. I tried untiringly for four whole months to sell my cloth but my efforts were of no avail. The stock lay like a dead weight around my feet.

I had made two good friends, both very close and dear to me. One was Narottamdas, the grandson of Benidas of the Khobra gotra. The other was Thanmal Badaliya. The three of us were greatly attached to each other. We made a merry trio, spending all our time in each other's company.

One day, taking a carriage we went together to offer worship at a Jain shrine. After performing the usual rites of propitiation, the three of us approached the deity with folded palms and, in unison, made the following supplication : "O Lord, grant us wealth, for then we shall have occasion to come and offer worship at your shrine again."

After that day the three of us became still more attached to each other, one in body and soul. We began to spend every hour of the day together in sweet conversation.

Then, during that year, in the spring month of Phalgun, a rich friend of ours named Tarachand Mothiya, who was a son of Nema, invited me to join him in a marriage party which was soon to proceed out of town. Balchand was the groom. Narottamdas was travelling with it and I, too, was prevailed upon to go. I began to look for some money to take with me, and sold a few pearls which I had put aside for bad times. They fetched me thirty-two rupees, which sum I took with me on my journey.

When I returned I had no money left. I hastened to sell

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my stock of cloth for whatever I could get and had to be satisfied with four rupees less than my cost price. I used this money to pay off some interest that had fallen due. I was free of debt but a pauper once again.

I went to see Narottam at his house. He welcomed me warmly and forced me to share his meal. I told him I was bankrupt, with nothing left and nowhere to go. He implored me to come and live with him. He assured me that I was like a brother to him and that whatever was his was also mine. His house, he added, was always open to those whom he loved. I was hesitant and protested that others in his family, especially his wife, may not like my being there. But he silenced me with these words : "Can you think of anyone in my family who will say anything to hurt you ?"

He insisted and I could not refuse. He now made it a habit

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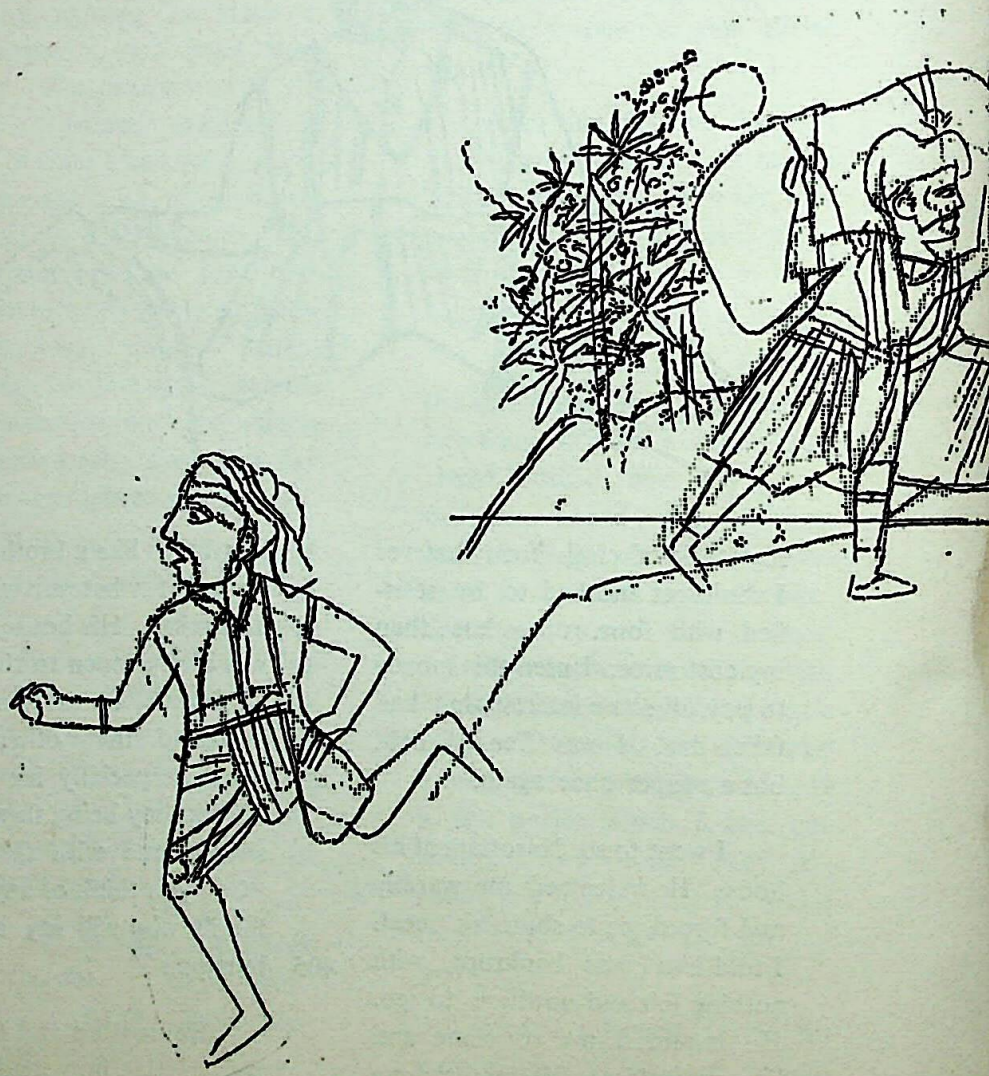
to address me as 'brother'; he also treated me like one, and we were always inseparable.

One day, when Narottamdas was with Tarachand Mothiya, Tarachand offered him some work. He asked Narottam to travel as his agent to Patna, taking me with him. He gave



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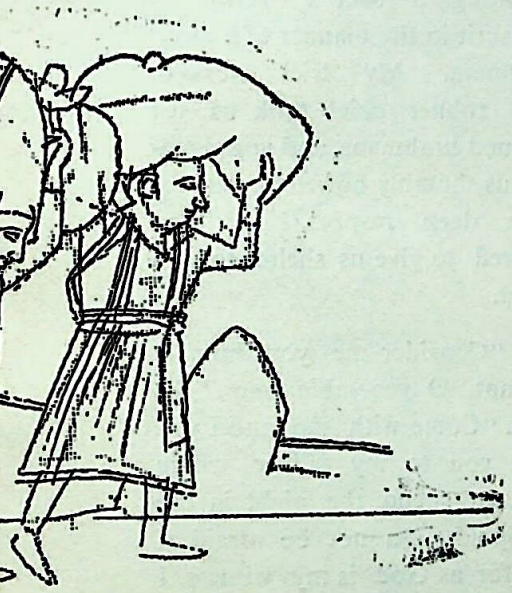
us money and we began making preparations for our departure. Then, on an auspicious day, we performed the propitiatory rites customary for people setting out on a long journey and crossed the Yamuna with tilak-marks on our foreheads.



We were three of us, Narottam, I, and his father-in-law: all young, able Srimal men. We hired a carriage for our journey but took no serving men.

We had hired our carriage at Firozabad and we were to travel on it upto Shahzadpur, about half way on the road to Patna. When we reached Shahzadpur we paid our fare and decided to cover the rest of the journey on foot, hiring a porter to carry our luggage.

We decided to leave Shahzadpur as early in the morning as possible. That night, about five hours after sunset, the moonlight suddenly became very bright and we were deceived into thinking that day was about to dawn. So we immediately set out on our way. But as the light was yet dim, we could not properly make out our path. We strayed towards the south and soon entered a thick forest. It was not long before we realized that we were completely lost in the middle of a desolate

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jungle. Our porter suddenly lost his wits and began to scream and howl in panic. He threw down the luggage he was carrying and ran away into the wilderness. We had no choice but to carry the load ourselves. We divided it into three bundles, one for each of us. But the journey now became an ordeal. We tried to ease our burden by constantly shifting the weight from head to shoulders, but this was hardly of any help. Soon it was midnight and yet we were still far away from anywhere. We were miserable and almost demented with fatigue, singing and crying in the same breath like men who have suddenly gone mad.

After a little while, we entered a part of the forest where robbers lived in little hamlets of their own. A man espied us and shouted: "Who goes there ?" We were seized with terror. Our lips were parched and suddenly glued together. We could not bring ourselves to utter a single word and began fervently to pray to God.

The man we had encountered was the chief of the robbers himself. Seeing him, I had a timely inspiration. I pronounced a benediction upon the man, chanting a sacred verse in Sanskrit in the manner of a pious brahman. My trick worked. The robber chief took us for learned brahmans, and approaching us, humbly bowed at our feet with deep respect. He also offered to give us shelter for the night.

"Consider me your humble servant, O venerable ones," he said. "Come with me and I will take you to my village where you can spend the night in the chaupal.[1] Do not be afraid of me, for as God is my witness, I mean you no harm."

We quietly followed the robber chief to his village, and, true to his word, he gave us a place for the night.

But we were still trembling violently with fear, our hearts pounding and our faces drained of all colour. As soon as we were alone, we hurriedly hunted

1 A place where villagers meet to sit and gossip or conduct business. It is also used as a shelter for guests or travellers.

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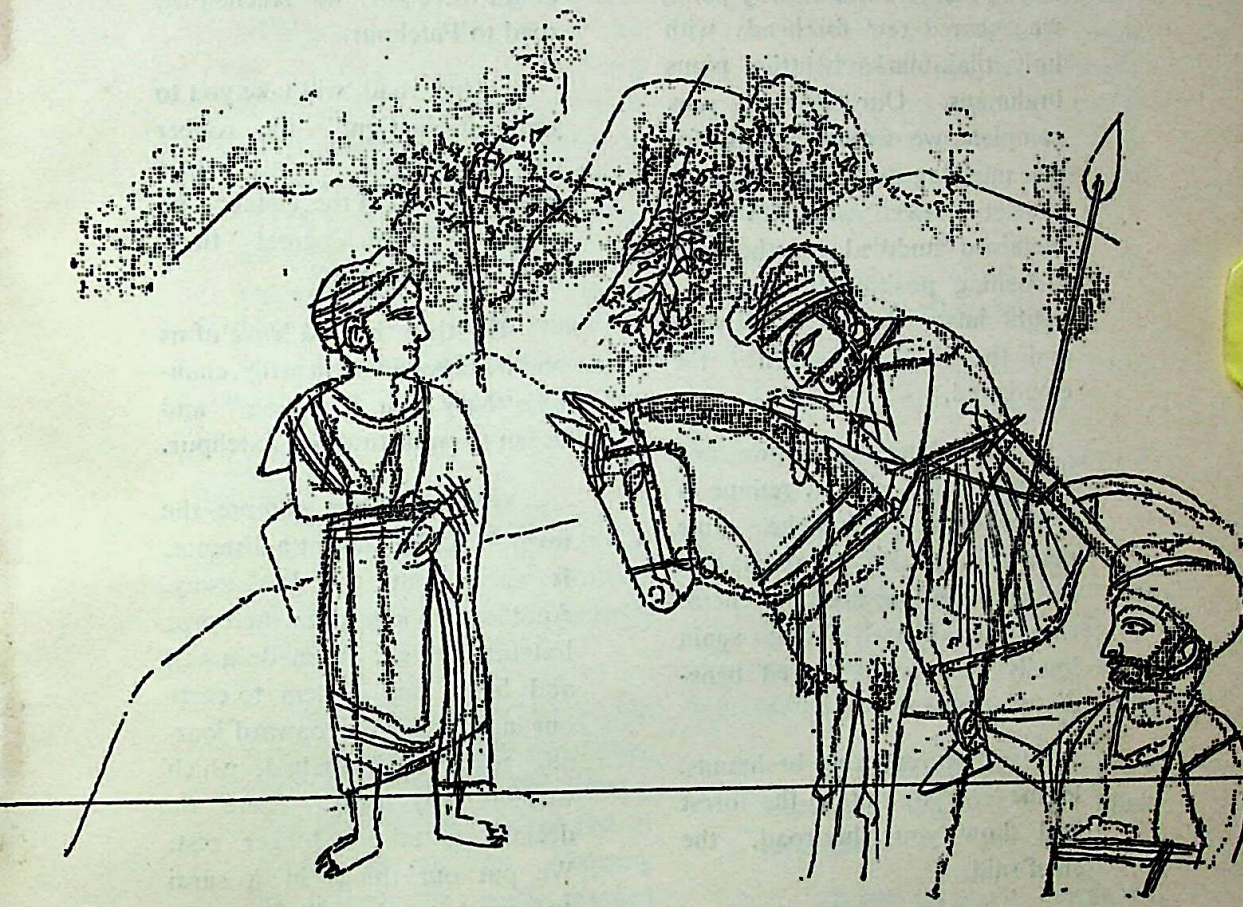

for some loose yarn and quickly spun it into four sacred threads (janeu)[1] such as every brahman must wear. We then hung three of the sacred threads across our shoulders, and kept the fourth conspicuously out for all to see. Then, fetching some mud and a

1 The sacred thread worn by high caste Hindus. Banarasi, being a Jain, had no janeu. Even high caste Hindus do not strictly observe the rule of wearing it, but for a brahman engaged in sacred studies, such as Banarasi and his friends were pretending to be, a janeu was a must.

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little water from a nearby pond, we smeared our foreheads with holy tilak-marks befitting pious brahmans. Our disguise now complete, we waited quietly for the morning to come. But we were still seized with fear and remained huddled together in a crouching position till about six hours later when light dawned and the rising sun turned the clouds red.

The robber chief approached us on a horse with a retinue of twenty men. When he came near us, he folded his palms and deeply bowed his head in veneration. I blessed him, again loudly intoning a sacred benedictory verse.

"Come venerable brahmans, let me lead you out of the forest and show you the road," the chief said.

Obediently, we followed him with our bundles on our head. The man meant well and took us along a path that led out of the forest. After we had walked for about three kos, we reached the road to Fatehpur.

"This road will take you to your destination," the robber chief assured us. Pointing to a clump of trees in the distance, he added: "There, across those trees, lies Fatehpur."

He then begged leave of us and we blessed him heartily, chanting "May you live long," and began to walk towards Fatehpur.

We could soon glimpse the town of Lakhraun at a distance. It was about two kos away. Another two kos from there was Fatehpur, where we made a halt and hired two porters to carry our luggage for the onward journey towards Allahabad, which was six kos away. There we decided to take a longer rest. We put our things in a sarai and went to the ghat[1] on the bank of the Ganga where we took our meals.

I now walked down alone into the city to meet my father,

1 A stone or brick platform built on a river bank with steps leading down to the water. In important centres of pilgrimage such as Prayag, ghats are almost like market-places with shops catering to the various needs of the huge crowds of pilgrims that gather there for a ritual bath.

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Kharagsen. I was seeing him after a long time and was thrilled with joy. I ran to touch his feet and he clasped me to his bosom with great tenderness. Then he took me aside and asked me how things were with me. I told him all that I had been through and my words fell on him like mortal blows. It was more than he could bear and he fell down unconscious. My joy at seeing him turned into a sudden anxiety for his well-being.

My father remained in a coma for more than an hour before regaining consciousness and good cheer.

We now decided to take the road to Jaunpur and my father also came with us. We hired a palanquin for him, but the rest of us continued on foot. Crossing the Ganga, we soon reached Jaunpur, from where Narottam and I set out for Banaras, hoping to set up profitable business there.

The first thing we did in Banaras was to visit the famous shrine of the Tirthankara Parsvanatha. We stood reverently before his image and made a profound vow to abstain from a number of things we normally liked and to become more moral and religious in our conduct. Here are the vows which we pledged to observe :

Never to eat after dusk, or until an hour after sunrise.

To put aside half a paisa every day towards charity.

To turn the rosary at least once a day, chanting the namokara mantra.

When guilty of an omission in observing any of the vows in the morning, to refrain from taking ghee for the rest of the day.

To undertake a fast on every fourteenth day of a lunar fortnight.

To give up green vegetables of fifty different kinds.

To adhere to our vows even during travels to the best of our capacity.

Not to marry more than twice.

Never to commit adultery.

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With Lord Parsva as our witness, both Narottam and I made these vows solemnly and sincerely. As we returned home, we felt very elated, as though we had become enriched through the possession of a priceless treasure. We partook of our meals and happily ate pan.[1]

This event occurred during the bright half of the month of Baisakh in the year Vikram 1671.

Our efforts in Banaras proved a success and our business began to flourish, keeping us busy and occupied. Then one day a letter arrived from my father bearing sad tidings. My wife had died. She had been living at her father's house expecting a baby. A son was born to her and she was overjoyed, but within fifteen days both mother and son had died.

To this tragic news my father had added that my father-in-law had thoughtfully offered me the hand of another of his daughters. He had, indeed, sent her to my parents in Jaunpur with his family barber carrying a coconut as the symbol of a marriage offer. My father had accepted the proposal on a propitious day.

I read the letter with a curious mixture of joy and sorrow, feeling like a pair of blacksmith's pincers which continually alternate between the burning flames and a pail full of cold water.

After reading the letter I burst into tears. And Narottam, too, wept with me. But I quickly controlled myself, and steeled my heart against the inevitable.

Narottam and I now plunged ourselves into our work with great energy, attempting to give our business a sound and firm footing. We were dealing in rubies, pearls, emeralds and stone-dust (chunni), and slowly the volume of our trade began to increase. We toiled hard, shunning all rest. We did not even take time off for our midday

1 The leaf of *Piper betel*, dressed with nuts and spices, and eaten as a delicacy. "The eating of this leaf," Akbar's court historian Abul Fazl says, "renders the breath agreeable and repasts odorous."

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meal, always postponing it till late in the day. We had to forego the joy of working together, because one of us had often to rush to Jaunpur while the other remained in Banaras. Even at Banaras we had to divide our work and pursue it in different parts of the town, hardly seeing each other during the day.

This state of affairs lasted for six months and we sweated hard like horses all the time. Then we got some respite. The amir Cini Qilij Khan, who was then the governor of Jaunpur, took a liking to me and began to show me favour. Cini Qilij was a son of the elder Qilij, and held a mansab of four thousand horses in the emperor's court. He was a learned man, brave and generous. He called me to him and bestowed upon me a siropao[1] as a sign of his grace. Ours was a strange and wonderful relationship. He was kind to me and I considered him a dear friend. Our good relations lasted for a long time, through thick and thin.

There was, however, at this time, one man who treated me with great malice. Deep indeed was his enmity; so deep, that I am sure it had accumulated over many past lives. He caused me great suffering. I will not trouble you with the details, but suffice it to say that I sincerely wish no man behaves with another as he behaved with me.

For a long time this man tormented both Narottam and me. He would not let us live in peace. He made our life a torture and even extracted money from us. For a time, he succeeded in making Qilij Khan cold and indifferent towards me.

Two months passed. Qilij Khan had gone out on a military expedition, from which he returned victorious after capturing the small fort he had laid siege to. He was a changed man and renewed his favours towards me. He studied three works with me: the *Namamala*, the *Chandakosa* and the *Srutabodha*, and continued to be kind and gracious

1 Literally 'siropao' means from 'head to foot'. It consisted of a complete set of attire from head to foot bestowed as a sign of honour.

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towards me, never showing any
455 signs of apathy or ill-will.

My sworn enemy was extremely alarmed at this turn of events, even though I had done or said nothing to make him apprehensive. He called a council of four elders to act as mediators between us. The quarrel was now finally resolved and I was overjoyed, feeling free like a bird released from captivity.

In Vikram 1672, Cini Qilij Khan died. Narottam and I went to Patna, hoping to do good business there. We remained in Patna for over six months. But business did not turn out the way we had hoped. We had to work long and hard for petty insignificant deals and were forced to give up the effort finally.

I returned to live in Jaunpur. At last my business began to really flourish. But I will not reveal to you how I finally achieved success, for I must remain heedful of the wise old dictum which says :

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"There are nine unutterables concerning oneself: age, wealth, affairs of the household, deeds of charity, of glory, infamy, measures taken for health, sexual escapades and plans for future action."

A man's wealth, then, is not something that he should talk about, and I, too, shall remain silent on this subject.

I spent the next two years trading in three cities: Jaunpur, Banaras and Patna. Then, suddenly, calamity descended again; this time in the form of Agha Noor. The emperor called this dreaded amir to him, honoured him with a siropao and dispatched him on a hateful mission towards our region. Terror spread with the news of his coming. People began fleeing their homes. Narottam and I were out of Jaunpur. We rushed back, concealed our families as best as we could and fled, taking the road to the north. We travelled on foot, carrying strong sticks in our hands.

We walked to Ayodhya and offered worship at the famous shrine in that town. But we did not stop there for long and pushed on to Raunahi, where we became devotees at the shrine of the Tirthankara Dharmanatha. Here we hid ourselves in the guise of pilgrims for seven days, offering devout worship at the shrine.

We started back for home after a week, but on the way travellers gave us news of terrible happenings. Agha Noor had unleashed terror in Banaras and Jaunpur. Vindictively, he vent his wrath on merchants and tradesmen, many of whom were beaten to death or near death by his orders. Countless tradesmen: ornament makers, money-lenders (kothiwal), bankers (hundiwal), gold and silver smiths, jewellers and brokers, had been arbitrarily put in to prison by him; he never cared to stop and think whether they deserved such harsh treatment. He had them all chained and cruelly whipped, throwing many into dark dungeons. None escaped unhurt from his hands.

We trembled at the news and instantly gave up the thought of going back home.

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We turned instead towards Surhurpur. We had to face a river on the way, which we quickly crossed on rafts devised impromptu out of empty pitchers. We were lucky to sight a tiny fortress hidden in the midst of a jungle and lived there for forty days.

Then fortunes reversed, this time for the better. Agha Noor turned back to Agra. He released the citizens he had imprisoned. But he took with him a few of the most wealthy of them as prisoners after having had them beaten up mercilessly. God alone knows whether his action was justified or not. But for Narottam and me there was now no cause for fear. We returned home in peace and were united with our near ones after a long and painful separation.

This was when I received a letter from Agra sent by Sabal Singh Mothiya, son of Sahu Nemidas. The letter was in Sabal Singh's own hand, and he had asked both Narottam and me to come to Agra. He had sent the following message :

'I request both of you partners to leave the east and come to me at Agra.'

About this time, another letter also arrived from Agra. It was from Narottam's father, and was meant for Narottam's eyes alone. It was delivered secretly to him, and he read it in privacy. But after reading it, he immediately brought it to me, and handed it to me with the words "Here is a letter in your uncle's own hand. Please read it."

It was a brief letter containing no more than eight or ten lines. It began with the usual expression of felicitations, and then followed this message:

'Kharagsen and Banarasi are both rogues of the first order. They have enticed you into their net with subtle cunning and deceit. If you continue to keep their company and act as they dictate, you will soon become a beggar. Therefore, take my advice, beware of them, and be forewarned.'

I read the letter without agitation or loss of composure. But Narottam became extremely

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emotional. He fell at my feet and began to cry. He implored me not to pay heed to what his father had written. He appealed to my better judgement, saying that since I knew his father and realised that he was a man lacking in sense, I should not take the words of such a man to heart. As for himself, he passionately declared, I was his only real kin, his true father.

His words reassured me of his love and we continued to be as attached to each other as ever. My regard for him now knew no bounds. I sang his praises before every one I met. I composed a eulogy in verse to honour him, and recited it like a bard all day at home and at the market-place. Let me quote the verse :

NAturally devout, he is ever meditating on the good path

His thoughts never stray from God

For he is a man of true knowledge

Wise, and renowned for his wisdom.

RObust, handsome as a god

He is a delight to behold

A haven of beauty as of wealth

And yet never forgetful of the call of dharma.

TAke a selfless man, and you have him

Remember his gracious gifts

And the seven tracts of land he gave away in pious grants.

Come let us act as the vanguard, bearing his fame to all.

MArk him, he is dear to me as life,

A weighty soul, a worthy man

Can you not guess who he is ?

Just take the first syllable of every stanza

And you will have his name

NA RO TA MA

He was the best friend I had.

We had both been busy making preparations for our trip to Agra, when my father suddenly fell very sick. He was in severe pain and it was certain that his end was near; so certain, in fact, that we began to distribute gifts

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of fruits and vegetables among our kin, such as the custom is when someone is about to die. There was no question of my going to Agra now. But Narottam decided to leave without me. So we wound up our partnership after drawing up proper accounts, and on Monday, the seventh of the bright half of the month of Baisakh, Vikram 1673, we divided our joint stock, apportioning to each his due share. We kept for our records two separate copies of the detailed daily journal (roznama) of our business transactions.

Narottam then left for Agra and I remained with my dying father in Jaunpur. He passed away on the fifth night of the dark half of the month of Jyesth. People came to console me, saying that he had gone to heaven. As for myself, I do not know where he went, or departed for which unknown world—only the All-knowing knows that; but I wept desolately with grief, and for days my eyes rained tears. Yet, once again, I had to steel my heart in order to face the inevitable and remind myself that no one lives for ever.

A month passed before I could devote my mind and time to business again. I now decided to trade in cloth once more. I borrowed five hundred rupees against a hundi (promissory note) and began purchasing stock. I had just been able to collect all the stock I needed when a letter arrived from Nemidas Sah asking me to come immediately to Agra. It was urgent, he wrote, for me to be in Agra, for without my presence it would not be possible to settle our joint business accounts.

I decided not to delay my journey any more, and leaving my stock of cloth and the management of my business in the hands of a brahman named Shivram, I set out for Agra on an auspicious day.

I made my journey in the rain-month of Asadh, taking with me a horse and nine attendants. On the first day of travel I made a halt at a village called Ghaisua, where I chanced to meet another merchant who had arrived there

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the same day. He belonged to the Maheshwari clan of Hindu merchants and lived somewhere in the vicinity of Agra, where he had a business in money-lending. He had with him six attendants. Two brahmans from Mathura were also accompanying him. Together we were nineteen men, all travelling to Agra. We decided to travel together in a group and to make halts at the same places. We set out in the morning, a merry band, laughing and frolicking with good humour. After a long journey across many towns and villages, we arrived at a place called Korara, which is near the town of Ghatampur. We stopped here at a sarai, took our meals and settled down to rest. Our two brahman companions from Mathura betook themselves to the house of an ahir woman, known for her loose morals. One of them walked down to the market-place, exchanged a rupee for small coins, and returned to the ahir woman's house with plenty of food and confectioner's delicacies (saj). The brahman had made his exchange of the rupee coin at a silver-merchant's shop. This merchant turned up at the ahir woman's house after a while and charged the brahman of having given him counterfeit money. He showed the brahman the rupee coin, who looked at it and countered that it was not the coin he had given to the man. A quarrel ensued, the brahman vehemently disowning the coin and the merchant insisting that it was the very coin which the brahman had given him. The volatile brahman lost his temper, became violent, and began to handle the silver-merchant roughly, beating him with sharp blows. Some people who had gathered around tried to restrain him and implored him to let the man go. But the brahman was beyond restraint. His rage was uncontrollable and he continued showering blows on the silver merchant. Then a brother of the silver-merchant arrived on the scene, a man with a sweet tongue and a cunning, scheming mind. He feigned outraged indignation and sternly demanded to search the brahman's attire. He imposed upon the brahman to allow him to inspect his dress and soon discovered

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twenty five-rupee coins concealed in the folds of the brahman's dhoti. He took a look at these coins and loudly declared to the assembled crowd that they were all counterfeit and should be shown to the kotwal. He even made a great show of taking them around and letting everyone inspect them, without, of course, really meaning to do so. Then he ominously announced that he was taking the coins to the kotwal. Our two brahman friends were struck with mortal terror at these words. Completely at their wits end, all they could do was to lie down on the ground, feigning death.

The merchant rushed away with the rupee-coins, shouting that he was going straight to the kotwal. But he made hurriedly for his home, where he changed the good coins for bad ones. He placed the counterfeit coins in a thin, transparent pouch and securely tied the pouch with a careful knot. He then set off to meet the kotwal. He humbled himself before the official and told him that a group of thugs were in town, behaving like a marauding horde and striking havoc everywhere. He pleaded with the kotwal to saddle his horse quickly and see for himself the mischief they were creating. Having made this report, the merchant quietly slunk away.

The kotwal rushed to the hakim and reported to him the story. The hakim asked his divan to accompany the kotwal, and the two later appeared at our sarai at night looking like fearful phantoms in the dark. With them were hundreds of townsmen and the whole group surged towards us like a flood.

The divan and the kotwal came in, sat down on a cot and called for the two brahmans from Mathura. They questioned the brahmans about their identity and the two answered that they were brahmans from Mathura. Next they called my companion, the Maheshwari, and questioned him about his journey. The Maheshwari replied that he was a money-lender by trade and that he was travelling from Jaunpur to Agra. I, too, was similarly questioned

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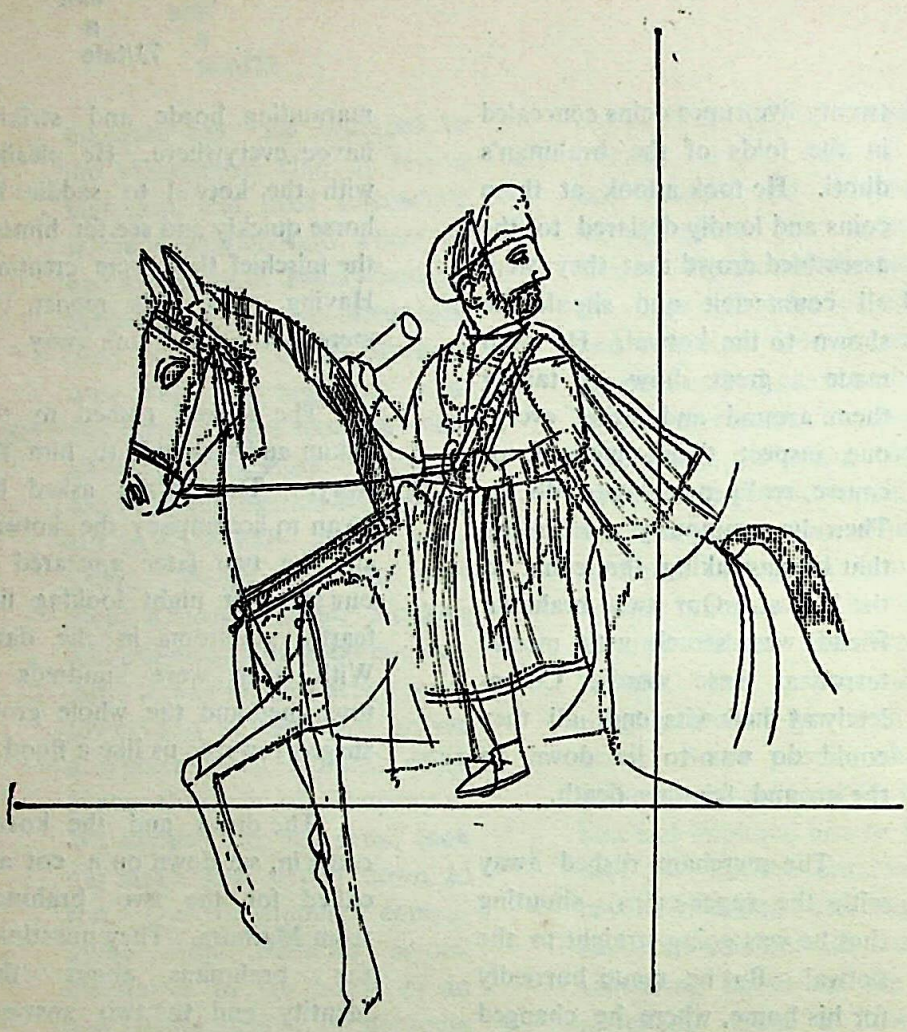

and replied that I was a jeweller dealing in precious stones. I told them that I had till then a firm in Jaunpur, but was presently returning to Agra, where I had earlier been a merchant doing business in partnership with Nema Sahu. I added that I had a house of my own in Jaunpur. I finally demanded of them if they had found any basis to charge us of any crime, asserting that the Maheshwari and I were both well-known,

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respectable merchants and that there was not a shred of evidence to accuse us of being thugs.

After listening to my words, the two officers began discussing the matter with each other in Persian. One of them was convinced we were thugs, but the other was ready to believe us and willing to grant that we could be telling the truth. Finally, the kotwal declared that he saw no point in arguing further and said that, in his opinion, we should be tied up and taken away prisoners. But the hakim's divan took our side.

"The kotwal is an idiot and a fool," he said, "we really do not know who these people truly are. And in any case nothing can be done till morning. In the morning we shall be able to investigate the truth and find out which class these people really belong to."

"Have your own way," the kotwal grudgingly conceded. "Wait till morning if you like and then look for something to convince yourself if you please. I have already questioned people from three towns, Korara, Ghatampur and Bari. They are the towns over which I have jurisdiction (sariyat) and I will not put any faith in any person from another town. Keep this fact in mind and see if you can discover someone who knows these people. I am off."

After this conversation, both went away. They posted guards around us and said that they would return in the morning.

We could not sleep the whole night. I sat talking to the Maheshwari, desperately trying to think of some way out of our plight. The night seemed interminable. A few hours before daybreak, however, the Maheshwari suddenly had a brilliant flash of memory.

"My brother Hari has in-laws who live in Bari," he spurted out. "I now remember it all, for I too had accompanied the marriage party."

"Fool," I shouted, "why were you hiding this crucial fact for so long ?"

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"I was paralysed with fear," he answered sheepishly, "and could remember nothing. Now at last it all comes back to me and we have nothing to fear any more."

I was reassured, but not quite fully, for I still had a lurking apprehension that the Maheshwari might be making it all up.

A group of soldiers came to us as soon as it was morning. They had been sent by the kotwal and had with them a group of porters carrying sulis,[1] nineteen in all, one for each of us. We were to be tortured to death on these sulis which the porters unburdened near the sarai, while the soldiers, addressing us loudly, declared that these nineteen sulis were for us nineteen thugs.

About half an hour later, the kotwal and the divan also arrived. With them were a host of townsfolk. They came up to us and began discussing our case. I told them we had relations in Bari who could indentify us. The divan, who had been taking our side, was exceedingly pleased : "Excellent," he said, "now at last you have come out with something helpful. Come with me to Bari, and there we shall discover the truth."

The Maheshwari climbed on his horse. With the divan riding behind him, the two of them set off immediately for Bari where they called upon the Maheshwari's relations, and, at last, our credentials were established beyond doubt.

The Maheshwari stayed back at Bari but the Mughal officer returned soon. He came to me and politely apologised.

"Please do forgive me for all the trouble Sahu," he said.

I made a suitably humble reply : "Sir, you are our master. Do not blame yourself for anything that has occurred. Whatever happened was destined to have happened. It was

1. An iron spike used for torturing criminals.

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our own past karma which made you suspect us. The fault was not yours."

The Mughal officers then went away and at last I heaved a sigh of relief. But our two brahman friends now found words. "What about our money ?" they blurted. So a little later I went to meet the Mughal officers in order to find out if anything could be done in the matter. As a gift for them I took with me about seven kilos of phulel, which is a costly oil perfumed with the essence of flowers. I made a visit to the home of the hakim, the divan and the kotwal, making them a present of the oil, giving to each a share in keeping with his rank.

After I could see that they had now become favourably inclined towards me, I told them of the deceptive trick the silver-merchant had played upon us and exhorted them to catch the man, for he was the real culprit, and extract our money from him. One of the Mughal officers replied that he had already made all necessary enquiries and was quite aware of the truth of the matter. In fact, he said, they knew of it long before I had come and told of it, but the culprit had absconded with our money the very day he had made the complaint and they had been unable to trace him anywhere. He pressed on me the fact that I and my friends should, on our part, be happy to be still alive and free.

"Forget about the money," he finally said, "go and celebrate the fact that you are still among the living and distribute sweetmeats among your friends as thanksgiving."

Realizing that the only way of getting our money now was to use power and influence, of which we had none for we were strangers to the place, I decided to give up further efforts and quietly made my way back to the sarai with a silent prayer to God, expressing my gratitude for the fact that what had happened was now nothing but a figment of the past.

At the sarai I told the brahmans that they should give up the hope of getting back their

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money; it was lost beyond retrieval. Our Maheshwari friend had returned in the evening and we all took our meals together and spent the night in joyful festivities, celebrating our escape from death. In the morning we resumed our journey, happy to get away from that horrid place. We felt as though we were moving away from the jaws of death.

On the second day of our onward journey I received tragic news. My dearest friend Narottam had died. The news came to me in a letter from Benidas, his father. I cried wretchedly till I could not bear the agony any longer and fell down unconscious in a state of torpor. The rest of my journey was spent in a daze of misery. I wailed and moaned incessantly with pain. All the efforts of my companions to console me proved fruitless. I was beyond comfort.

Greed, they say, is the root of all sin

The source of disease and indigestion

Even of life and death;

But it is love, alas, love

Which is the source of all our sorrows.

At last I was somehow able to restrain myself and rode on with some composure. We were approaching Agra and soon arrived at the banks of the Yamuna. The city lay just across the river. Here our two brahman companions were to part company with us. They presently began to moan and cry for their lost money, whining that they were as good as dead without it. They lay down on the road, blocking our path, entreating us for their money, and threatened to commit suicide if we allowed them to go empty-handed. We had no option but to yield to their plea and we decided to make good their loss from our own pockets. The Maheshwari gave them twelve rupees and I gave them thirteen. The brahmans blessed us happily and went away home satisfied. We too were glad to escape the sin of allowing brahmans to suffer for their loss.

In Agra, the Maheshwari and I at last parted company and

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went our separate ways. As soon as I reached home I felt faint again and cried unconsolably for my dead friend. Hours passed before I could steady myself enough to venture out on business.

I went in the evening to the house of Sahu Sabal Singh Mothiya to meet him and confer with him about settling our business accounts. It proved to be the first of many futile visits. Every day, unfailingly, I visited him at his house but never found the Sahu in a mood to discuss accounts. He was a spoilt, rich man, revelling in his possessions. Whenever I went to him I saw him surrounded by musicians. Famous singers sang before him with wonderful art while skilled players on string instruments displayed their virtuosity to the accompaniment of sonorous pakhawaj drums. He was always sitting in court like a prince distributing bounty and gifts. Poets, bards and ministrels stood before him reciting eulogies in his praise. From morning till evening he was in the midst of a dazzling exhibition of affluence such as I can find no words to describe.

I was overawed; but I also realized that if things went on in this manner I could continue visiting him till the end of
560 time without my accounts being ever settled. For weeks now I had been paying him court and whenever I mentioned the subject of accounts, the Sahu invariably put the matter off for the next day. He never once spoke to me of business or of the urgent matter that he had to settle with me.

But I could do nothing except wait. It was an agonising ordeal that a cruel fate had kept in store for me. Every hour passed like a month; every day like a year. Yet to the Sahu, the inexorable flow of time meant nothing whatever. He was drunk with incessant pleasure; to him the dawning of a new day or the passing away of the old were events without significance.

I was thus forced to spend innumerable days waiting in vain. Then one day, at Sabal Singh's

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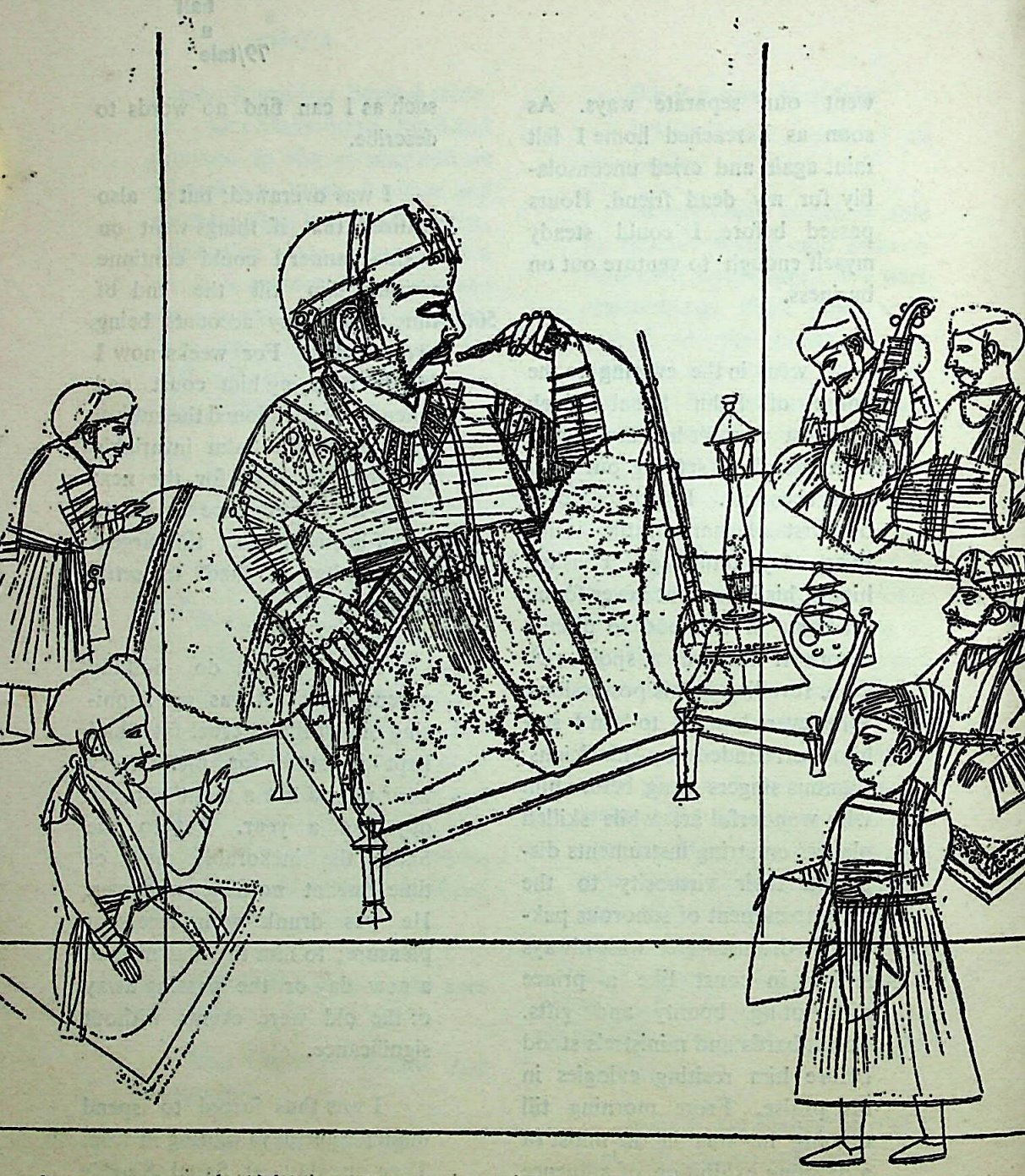

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Mothiya's house, I met an old friend, Anga Sah. It was a great stroke of luck for me because Anga Sah, who was the paternal uncle of Benidas, Narottam's father, was married to a sister of the Sahu. He was a good and upright man, fair and large-hearted in his dealings, and a man of many parts. I spoke to him of my plight, telling him that I was at the end of my tether and that Narottam's father, too, had to share my fate; we just did not know what to do. I implored him to plead my case with the Sahu and persuade him to give his mind to our accounts. I impressed upon him the fact that unless our accounts were settled and a proper document recording this transaction was drawn up, the earlier agreements which were still binding on us could not be declared void, and I could not become a free man.

Anga Sah talked to Sabal Singh that very day and prevailed upon him to call for the relevant documents. Our joint accounts were then properly tallied and the matter was finally settled to the satisfaction of all concerned.

A deed of settlement was drawn up on which Sahu Sabal Singh and Narottam's father, my erstwhile partners, affixed their signatures. No further complaints could now be made against me in this matter. For now I had a document recording a pledge of settlement made by both my partners and stamped with the impressions of their hand. None of us were now bound by the conditions of our partnership. I went to my rooms absolved and happy.

This event took place in the year Vikram 1673, during the dark half of the winter month of Agrahayana. My good karma was now on the rise. I rented a new place. The cloth I had at Jaunpur was despatched to me through reliable hands by the brahman in whose charge I had left it. I drew up a register documenting all that I had, and began to frequent the market in order to sell the cloth. I happily kept adding profits to my now increasing capital.

Then a calamity befell Agra. The city was suddenly in the grip of a raging plague, the one

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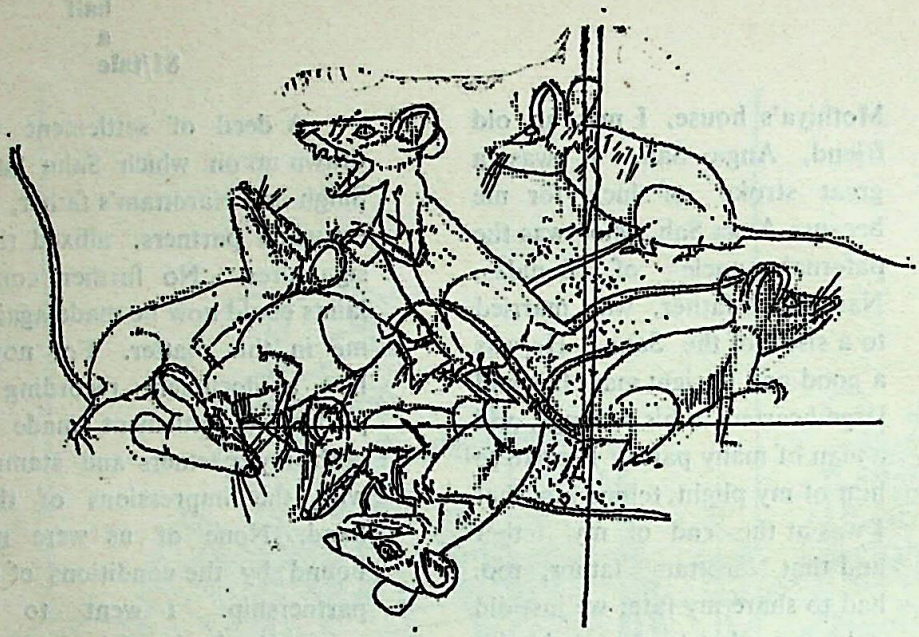

which was later to be known as the First Plague. A mortal disease, called the disease of the clot (gamthi ka rog), spread rapidly over the city. Its distinctive symptom was the appearance of a clot on the body, an invariable sign of instant death. There was no cure for it. Doctors, too, were dying like rats. No one dared touch food for fear of contagion. People fled from Agra in a great exodus. I, too, left the city and took refuge in a nearby village called Azizpur. It was a pleasant little place, inhabited mostly by brahmans. I took lodgings close to a merchant's house and lived alone. During my stay at Azizpur I was guilty of a misdeed, a foul fruit of my past karma, of which I shall speak not a word, for it is better that the matter lie buried.

Gradually the plague in Agra disappeared on its own and people began returning to their homes. A few days later I journeyed to Amarsar to attend the marriage of Nihalchand.

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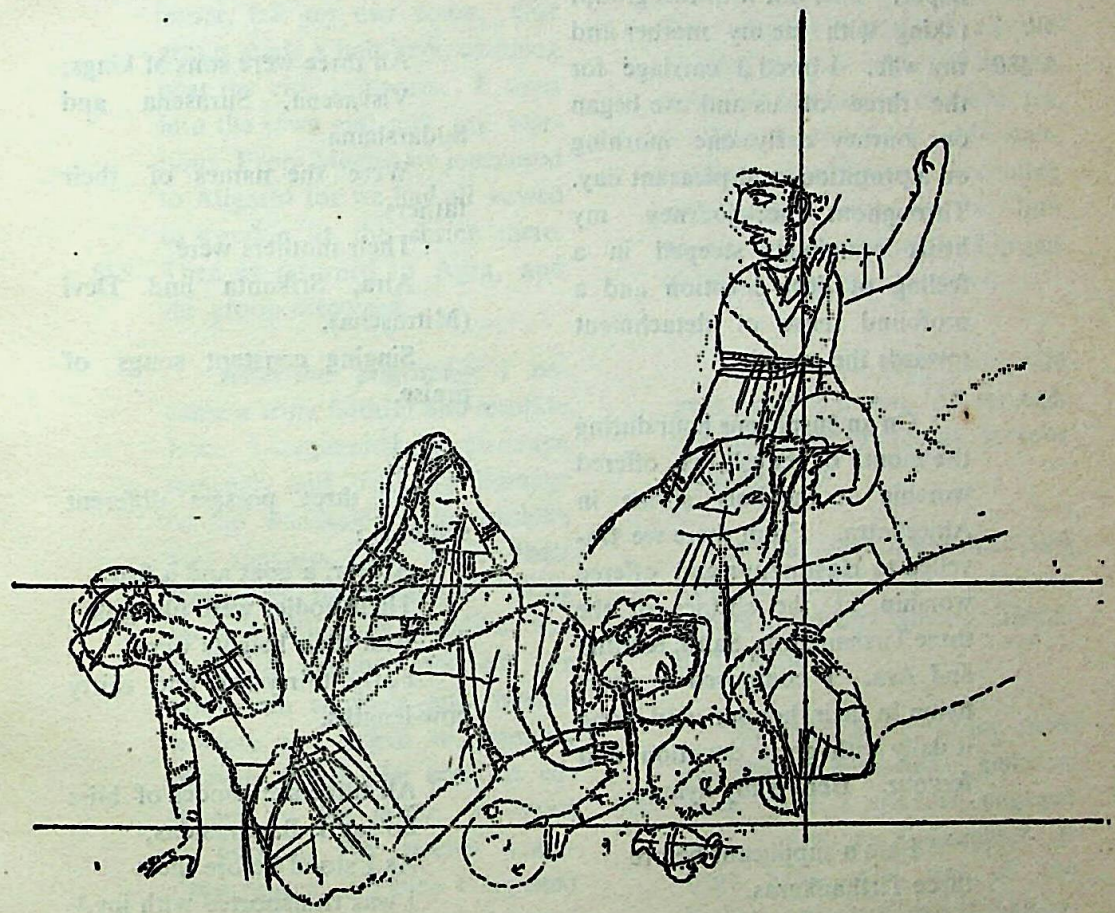
house of Sahu Sabal Singh. My mother now came from Jaunpúr to join me. Then I went to Khairabad for my wedding.[1] I returned soon after the ceremony



After my return to Agra, I became a frequent visitor at the and determined to set out on a pilgrimage. A big congregation

1 Banarasi had said earlier that when his first wife died, his father-in-law had sent another daughter of his to Jaunpur, offering her in marriage to Banarasi. Apparently, the girl had gone back to Khairabad after a formal engagement. The wedding took place now.

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of Jains under the leadership of Kanwarji Vardhaman, a well-known broker, had been making preparations to visit the holy cities of Ahicchatra and Hastinapur. I set out with this group, taking with me my mother and my wife. I hired a carriage for the three of us and we began our journey early one morning on a propitious and pleasant day. Throughout the journey my heart remained steeped in a feeling of deep devotion and a profound sense of detachment towards the world.

On an auspicious hour during the month of Paush we offered worship at the holy shrine in Ahicchatra. From there we travelled to Hastinapur and offered worship at the shrines of the three Tirthankaras, Santi, Kunthu and Ara. I composed a short hymn in their honour and sang it daily with great devotion and fervour. Here is my hymn :

I am a supplicant before
three Tirthankaras,
Santi, Kunthu and Ara
Who were all born in Hastinapur
Also known as Gajapur and Nagapur.

All three were sons of kings;
Visvasena, Surasena and Sudarshana
Were the names of their fathers.
Their mothers were
Aira, Srikanta and Devi (Mitrasena),
Singing constant songs of praise.

All three possess different symbols :
A deer, a goat and a fish.
Their bodies were like gold
And their heights were
Forty, thirty-five, and thirty bow-lengths.

All three are abodes of bliss
So say I, Banarasidas;
As I stood before them
I was transported with joy.[1]

1 This verse (*Ardhakathanaka*, 583) is clearly no more than a string of legendary material concerning these three Tirthankaras. Such bland hymns addressed to different Tirthankaras were quite common in Banarasi's days. If there is anything original in Banarasi's hymn, it is the fact that he is addressing three Tirthankaras in a single, short verse, and not just one Tirthankara as was more usual.

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half
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The pilgrimage was for me a profoundly blissful experience.

We made our return journey by way of Delhi. Meerut, the home of my maternal grandfather, fell on our route. Our group made a halt here, camping near the city ramparts. I went into the town and met my relations. From Meerut we journeyed to Aligarh[1] for we had all vowed to worship at the shrine there. Then we returned to Agra, and the group dispersed.

After this pilgrimage I became a truly faithful and resolute Jain. I frequented the upasraya regularly and paid my homage to the wandering Jain teachers and sanyasis who made their temporary homes there. With them I diligently studied the codes of conduct decreed for both Jain sanyasis and householders, and began to emulate, in every detail, the conduct ordained for the latter. I vowed to perform the twelve vrata-observances, and even composed a poem describing them. I began to follow the fourteen rules of self-restraint laid down in Jain scriptures. When I erred, I undertook penance. Every morning I performed the ritual of pratikramana, confessing to myself my past sins, vowing to remain alert in the future. As the days passed, I strove harder to perform all the decreed rituals and follow the rules of conduct prescribed for a Jain householder. My convictions, too, were becoming unbendingly anchored in Jain tenets, and consequently, I began to reject non-Jain doctrines.

In Vikram 1676, my wife gave birth to a son. All through the year my religious fervour steadily grew.

A year later, my mother died and I distributed the customary sweets and fruits among friends and relations.

In Vikram 1679, my wife and my son both died. But the same year I became engaged again; now to a daughter of Bega Sahu, who was of the Kukari gotra and lived in Khairabad. In Vikram 1680, I went to Khairabad for my third

1 Banarasi calls it Koil, which was the old name for the town.

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wedding and returned to Agra a householder once again.

During my sojourn in Khairabad I made a new and remarkable friend. His name was Arathmal Dhor. Arathmal loved to talk about Adhyatma, a new religious movement devoted to the mystic doctrine of the Spirit. Arathmal became very attached to me and gave me a book to read called *Samayasaranataka*, on which a scholar named Rajmalla had written an explanatory commentary in Hindi. Arathmal asked me to read the original with the help of the commentary, remarking that the work would surely afford me an insight into Truth. I began earnestly to study it, pondering over each word and its meaning with great earnestness, but I found that I was incapable of unravelling the mysteries of the true mystic doctrine. But my studies had the effect of completely shaking my faith in rituals and in everything else in religion which was just a conventional, outward form. I had wandered into a spiritual void, for although I lost faith in Form, I was unable to savour Spirit. I hovered between earth and heaven, befouling the air like a camel's fart.

Then slowly an alchemy began to work in my soul, transforming it for the better. A genuine spirit of renunciation was taking root in my heart. I began to sing of the Spirit beyond forms, and wrote a number of works embodying my new vision. Let me append here a list of works I wrote during these days: *Jnana Pacisi*, containing twenty-five verses on the essence of true knowledge; the *Dhyana Batisi* with thirty-two verses on the path of meditation; and the *Adhyatma ke Git*, or Songs of the Spirit. I also wrote the *Sivamandira* and miscellaneous verses in the more formal kabitta metre.

I renounced all rituals, giving up every form of ordained, conventional precept I had so long been religiously observing, namely, the uttering of mantras, the keeping of vratas, the samayika, the pratikramana and the like. I even broke my vow of never eating green vegetables. In

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fact, there was no end to my disillusionment with outward forms. I felt strangely isolated and everything began to seem alien to me.

There is much I could say about this stage of my life, but I feel I need not say more. But there is one thing I must confess: as I began to reject all forms and codes of conduct, I felt I was becoming more wicked and lowly in my dispositions. Thus, after my return from Sanganer where I had gone with a marriage party in which Tripur Das was the groom, I had become so irreligious that I thought nothing of snatching away sweets from the plate of offerings placed before the deity and gobbling it up greedily.

During these days I had three ungodly, blasphemous friends who were much given to jests and droll humour. I would often join them gleefully and together we made obscene fun of the religious life.

The names of my three friends were Chandrabhan, Udaykaran and Than. They were all very fond of clowning and horseplay. Whenever we met we would knock off each other's togas, and taking off our shoes would rap them thrice on each others head.

Often we had great fun devising impious games in which we pretended to be saints with profound mystic knowledge. We would shut ourselves in a small room, shed our clothes and dance in the nude exclaiming that we had shed the world and had become munis.[1] We would lustily rap each other with our shoes and loudly declare that here was a blow on the head of the man who dared to blaspheme against us. We composed verses which were parodies of well-known songs or sayings, and then amused ourselves by reading into them a bawdy, spiritual meaning.

We were madly in love with falsehood and folly, a result surely of the evil karma of our past. I cannot now imagine how we could have been deaf to all good advice, indulging shame-

1 A monk who has given up all possessions and attachments, committing himself to the world-denying ascetic life.

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lessly in indecent games with such starkly obscene intent. My irreverent attitude continued for as long as the fruits of my evil karma lasted. Then it disappeared spontaneously.

But my reputation had already become stained. All the Jains of my community, householders as well as sadhus, began to call me a hollow, fickle-minded man. They said that I had acquired fame as a pandit only because people were unaware of my three frivolous friends.[1] Who could have put a stop to such talk ? The towns-folk cannot be held back from speaking what they think. They see everything

1 Our translation here is extremely conjectural, for lines 3-4 of verse 608 are obscure.

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that happens and will inevitably pass judgement on people, praising or blaming their conduct as they think fit. Men of the world must need wag their tongues; they will gossip about all that they see or hear, even going to the length of concocting stories. Who can silence them ?

Gradually I outgrew my silly pranks, but not my irreverent attitude. In my thoughts I held the Tirthankara idols in disrespect. I spoke words one ought not to utter. I took solemn vows in the presence of Jain teachers only to disregard them wilfully as soon as I reached home. I became a demonic glutton, eating greedily all day like a hungry beast. I shunned company, wallowing in my own falsehoods: so totally was I intoxicated with them. I persisted in this attitude for a long time, and, indeed, my scepticism became more pronounced day by day.

In the month of Asadh, Vikram 1684, my third wife gave birth to her first son. He did not live for more than a few days, proving the transience of the world once again. During the same year, Emperor Jahangir died after a rule of twenty-two years while he was on his way to Delhi from Kashmir. Four months after his death, in Vikram 1684 (A.D. 1627), Shah Jahan ascended the throne at Agra assuming authority with all the insignia of kingship and the grand title of Sahib Khan Kiran.

In Vikram 1685, another son was born to me. He too lived for no more than a year or two. All my sons, alas, were extremely short-lived. Another son was born to me in Vikram 1687, and in Vikram 1689 I had a daughter. She too did not live for long. Neither my sons nor my daughters survived for more than a few months except one son, who lived for a few years. But he too died an early death. And now I am childless.

Time thus passed, but I continued in an irreverent frame of mind.

I have been giving you an outline of the main events between Vikram 1680 and 1692. However, a few things still remain to be told. These I will now relate.

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Some time during these years I had gone with a marriage party to the village Chatsu for the wedding of the son of Baccha. I also did a good deal of writing. Here is a list of the major works I wrote during these years :

1. *Suktimuktavali*, which contains a hundred verses
2. *Adhyatmabattisika*, or thirty-two verses concerning spiritual love
3. *Paidi*
4. *Phag Dhamal*
5. *Sindhucaturdasi*
6. *Sivapacisi*, having twenty-five verses on dhyana or meditation
7. *Sahasatthottaranama*, a work on divine names
8. *Karmachatisi*
9. *Jhulna*, discussing the difference between Rama and Ravana
10. *Ankhe Doi Vidhi*, expounding visions of two distinct kinds

I also wrote two vacanikas, numerous astakas (a poem in eight verses) as well as lyrics (git) designed to be sung. I enjoyed exercising my imagination and wrote profusely, but my writings were a mere display of poetic virtuosity concerned only with partial or half truths.

In 1692 (1635 A.D.), Pandit Rupchand, a learned authority on Jain scriptures, came to Agra and stayed in a temple which a merchant named Tihuna Sahu had built. All of us, the Adhyatmis, requested him to expound to us the famous text, *Gommatasara*. The *Gommatasara* is a profound work on Jain doctrine dealing with the notion of gunasthana and the principles of right knowledge and conduct. Different orders of beings, it says, belong to different gunasthanas, which are various stages on the path to final enlightenment. The *Gommatasara* describes the different gunasthanas severally and at length. It reveals how, at the deepest level, the essence of being remains constant while outward forms and actions undergo incessant

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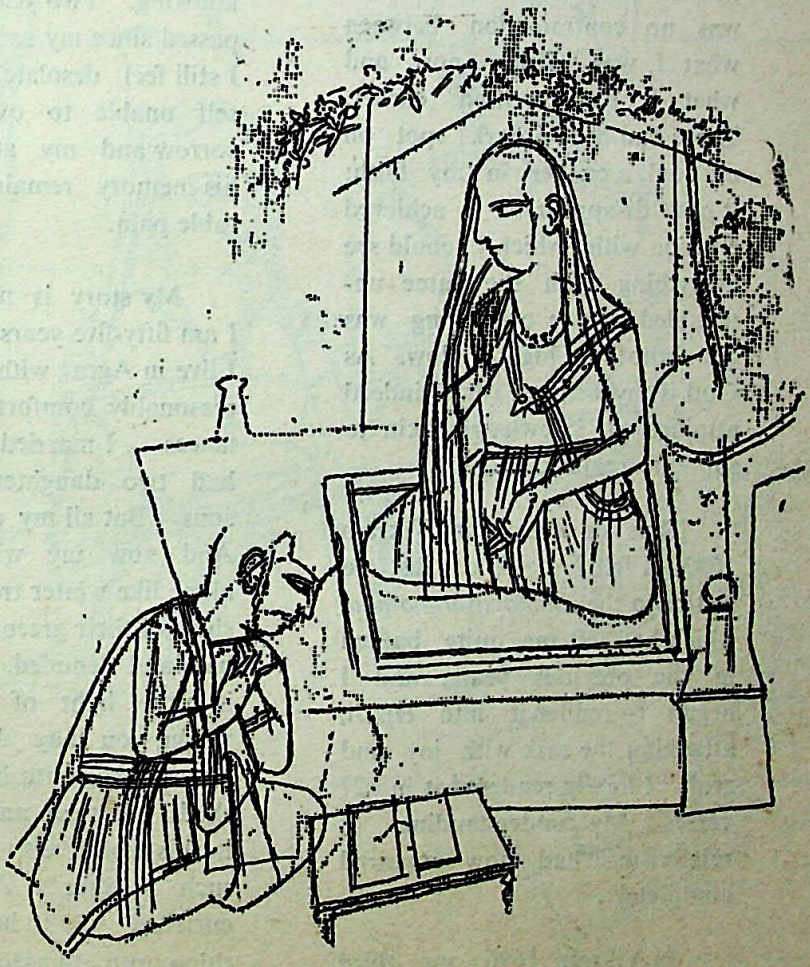
change. It speaks also of different standpoints from which things can be viewed.

For me its study was a revelation. All my doubts and questionings were put to rest and I became a new man. I had, at last, gained true and profound insight into the Jain doctrine of relativism (*Syadvada*).

Rupchand Pande was a great teacher. It was through his lucid teachings that I became rooted in the true spirit of



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Jainism. He passed away two years later.

I now began writing again. The poems I wrote now were written in the true light of the Spirit. I realized too that in the ultimate sense, there was no contradiction between what I was writing now and what I had written earlier. There had been a dark spot on my soul, a canker in my faith; it now disappeared. I achieved a vision with which I could see everything with the same untroubled eye : everything was equal, nothing high or low. As God is my witness, I had indeed attained a knowledge akin to supreme realization.

Thus in the year Vikram 1693, I felt I could at last do justice to the *Samayasaranataka*, which had left me quite baffled in the previous years, and I began to render it into Hindi, attacking the task with joy and zeal. I finally rendered it in 727 verses. My understanding of relativism had now matured completely.

In Vikram 1696, my third son, the only surviving child I had, also died. His death rent my heart with agony. I was wretched and miserable with sorrow. Worldly attachments are powerful bonds, for they bind both the ignorant and the knowing. Two years have now passed since my son's death, and I still feel desolate. I find myself unable to overcome my sorrow and my attachment to his memory remains an unbearable pain.

My story is now complete. I am fifty-five years of age, and I live in Agra with my wife in reasonably comfortable circumstances. I married thrice, and had two daughters and seven sons. But all my children died. And now my wife and I are alone like winter trees that have shed all their greenery, standing bare and denuded. Looking at it in the light of the absolute vision, you may declare that as a man takes unto himself, so he sheds. But can any man rooted in this world ever see things in such a light ? A man feels enriched when he takes something unto himself and utterly

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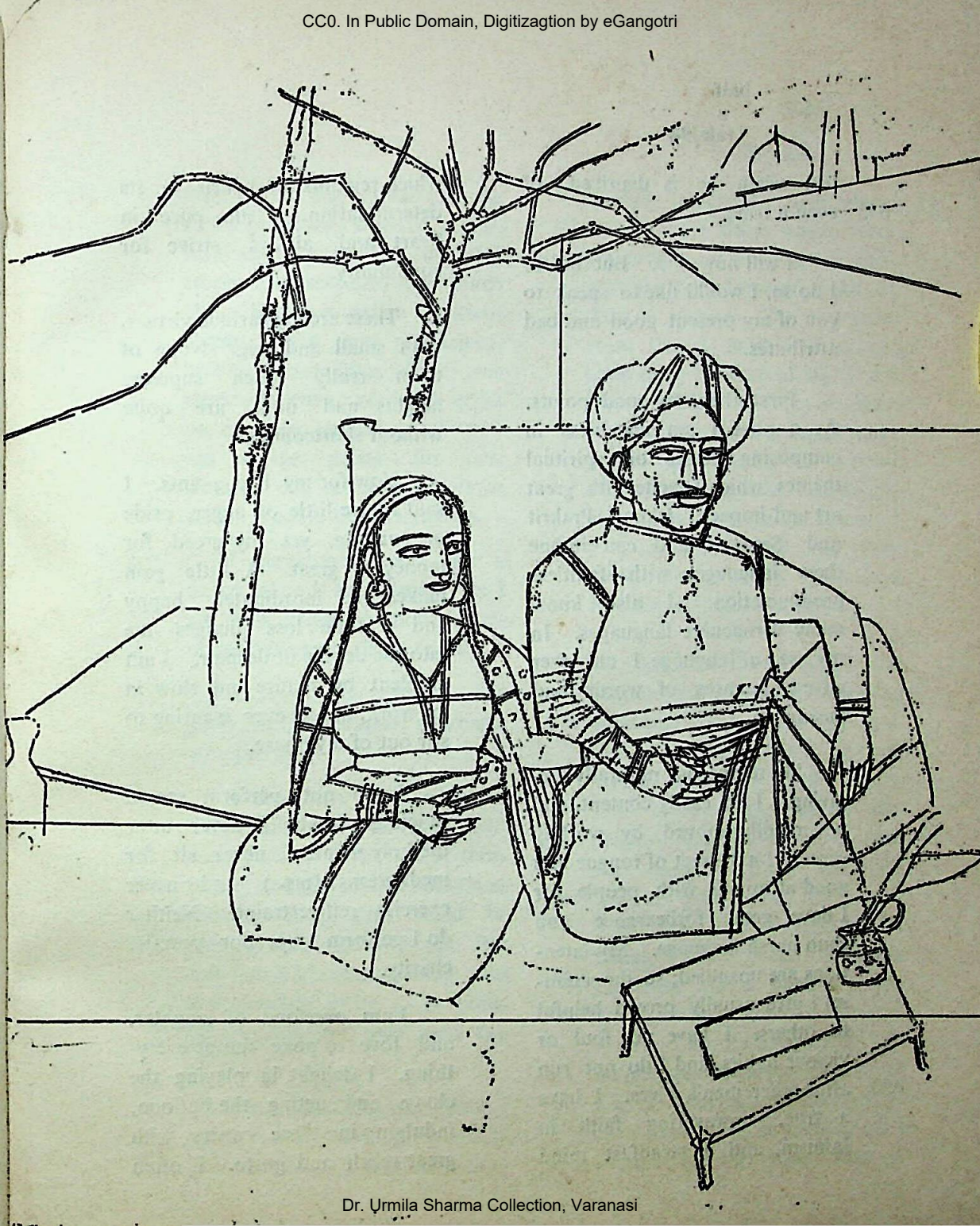

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lost when he is deprived of even a trifle.

I will now end. But before I do so, I would like to speak to you of my present good and bad attributes.

First, then, my good points. As a poet I am matchless in composing verses on spiritual themes, which I recite with great art and impact. I know Prakrit and Sanskrit and can intone these languages with faultless pronunciation. I also know many vernacular languages. In my use of language I am ever alive to nuances of words and meanings.

My temper is naturally forgiving. I am easily content, and not readily moved by worldly cares. I am sweet of tongue and good at mixing with people for I have great forbearance and shun harsh language. My intentions are unsullied; so the counsel I give usually proves helpful to others. I have no foul or vicious habits, and I do not run after other men's wives. I have a true, unwavering faith in Jainism, and a steadfast mind which remains unshaken in its determination. I am pure in heart and always strive for equanimity.

These are my various virtues, both small and big. None of them really touch supreme heights and none are quite without shortcomings.

Now for my bad points. I said I have little of anger, pride or cunning, yet my greed for money is great. A little gain makes me inordinately happy and a little loss plunges me into the depths of despair. I am indolent by nature and slow in my work, hardly ever wanting to stir out of my house.

I do not perform sacred religious rituals; I never utter the holy mantras, never sit for meditations (tapa) and never exercise self-restraint. Neither do I perform puja nor practise charity.

I am overfond of laughter, and love to poke fun at everything. I delight in playing the clown and acting the buffoon, indulging in these capers with great relish and gusto. I often

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utter things that should not be said without any sense of shame, revelling in narrating unutterable stories and escapades with much glee. I love to relate fictitious stories, often quite scandalous, and try to pass them off as true especially when I am in the midst of a large gathering. When I am in the mood for fun, nothing can restrain me from telling fanciful lies or untruths.

I sometimes break into a dance when I am alone. Yet I am also prone to sudden, irrational feelings of sheer dread.

Such is my temper. The good in my character alternates with the bad.

I have now done with all that I had to say about myself. Yet what I have said pertains mostly to my visible conduct and actions: things that could be seen or discovered by all. But in a man's life there is much that is too subtle to be so palpable. Of this, however, only God can know.

Also, I must confess that I spoke mostly of things I could best recollect. I have also deliberately remained silent about certain of my deeds which were perversities of such gross proportions that I cannot speak of them to anyone. Yet you must grant that I have not entirely shied away from speaking of my faults and follies. This at least is something quite unusual since people are careful to conceal even their smallest misdoings although they be petty things of common occurrence. A man who confesses to his faults is a Kevalin, a realized soul.

But none can report all that happens, not even the all-knowing Kevalin. Even in the tiny span of a day, a man passes through myriad states of consciousness. The all-knowing Kevalin can perceive them, but even he cannot describe them in their fulness. And who can know more than the Kevalin? The wisest, most occult of sages can know only a part of what the Kevalin knows. Compared to them I am nothing but a primitive earthworm with no more than the haziest of awareness. How could I have revealed all? A man's life has much that is

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subtly secret and profoundly beyond grasp. What I have reported is certainly the grossest of the gross part of my life. For as I said, I have spoken mainly of my outward conduct and behaviour.

I have narrated to you the story of fifty-five years of my life. The full span of a man's life is a hundred and ten years. I have lived only half of this span. I do not know what is to come in the future. God alone can know that.

All men at all times can be divided into three categories; the truly praiseworthy, the utterly despicable, and those who fall between these two.

The truly praiseworthy men are those who, in speaking of others, speak only of their merits, deliberately drawing a veil over their faults. When such men speak of themselves, they speak only of faults and never of their merits.

The utterly despicable have just the contrary traits. They only speak of faults in others while boasting of their own merits. Never do they utter a word about their own blemishes.

I am one who falls in-between. I speak unreservedly of both faults and merits in others as well as myself.

Today, as I complete my tale, it is Monday, the fifth of the bright half of the month Agrahayana, Vikram 1698 (A.D. 1641). I now live in Agra and I am, let me repeat, a Jain of the Srimal clan, Banarasi Biholia by name and an Adhyatmi by conviction. It occurred to me that I should make the story of my life public, and so I have narrated the events that have happened during these last fifty-five years. The future I do not know; I shall face it as it comes.

The story of the last fifty-five years of my life covers half the number of days allotted to man. I have, therefore, named my story 'Half a Tale'.

Wicked men will mock at my tale. But friends will surely give it a glad and attentive ear and recite it to each other.

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Before I finish I would like to extend my good wishes to all who may read my story or listen to it or recite it to others.

[This work of mine contains a total of 675 verses, mostly in the doha and caupai metres.]

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Notes and comments

Verse 1
Tīrthaṅkara

Suparsva and Parsva are the seventh and twenty-third Tirthankaras of the Jains, who revere their Tirthankaras as supreme spiritual leaders, the propagators of their faith. Literally, the word 'tirthankara' means 'one who creates a ford,' an idea which is used metaphorically to denote those rare, enlightened men who have crossed samsar, this world which is an ocean of pain, to the shores of freedom beyond, fording at the same time a path for others to follow.

The soul, according to the Jains, consists inherently of the stuff of knowledge. But this knowledge remains enveloped in a gross veil of karma-particles which blind its all-seeing vision. To the degree a soul can shed off this dark, dead karma-matter, its inborn knowledge shines forth. A Tirthankara is one who, through supreme meditation and asceticism, has succeeded in completely tearing away the veil

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of karma and thus becoming omniscient. With his all-knowing vision he preaches the true doctrine, showing men the way to deliverance.

Like the Hindus and the Buddhists, the Jains believe in a cyclic theory of time. Time, in this view, does not move inexorably forward in a straight line; it moves in a circle: it returns to the point from which it began again and again after each full turn. It may be likened to a vertically suspended wheel, revolving freely on its axis while remaining stationary at one place. There is no progress in it.

The cyclic movement of time, however, does not preclude change. The general condition of mankind changes with the swing of the wheel of time, improving as the wheel moves upward and entering a period of slow decline as it moves downwards. We are at present in the midst of the last and the worst stage of a downward movement, known among the Jains as avasarpini. Inspite of a relative change in the condition of man within each time–cycle, samsar or the world is essentially a prison-house for the soul. Souls, blind through karma, remain bound to the world and its endless cycle of time through an equally endless cycle of life and death unless they find deliverance through enlightenment. The Tirthankaras are the deliverers who guide men towards the path of freedom. There are twenty–four of them in every avasarpini.

The twenty–fourth Tirthankara of the present avasarpini was Mahavira, an older contemporary of Buddha, with whom he shared a common spiritual weltenschaung. He lived and preached in the 6th-5th centuries B.C., propagating Jainism as we know it today. Mahavira was a great ascetic in an already established order and tradition of monks which can be traced back with historical surety to Parsvanatha,

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known as the twenty–third Tirthankara. Parsva lived 250 years before Mahavira and is said to have been born in Banaras.

It is very likely that the Jain tradition is much older than Parsva. But the accounts we have of earlier Tirthankaras are purely mythical, with time assuming astronomical dimensions in their legendary stories. Neminatha, the twenty-second Tirthankara, is said to have been born 84000 years before Parsva. In the case of still earlier Tirthankaras we enter into epochs where time begins to be reckoned in billions of 'uncountable' years.

Unlike Hindu avatars whom they resemble, the Tirthankaras are not conceived as divine saviours but as human beings—though they are endowed with super-human traits. But like the Buddha, they became in later times the objects of highest worship, and shrines were erected to house their cultic images.

Verse 2
Names of Banaras

Banaras has been known by many names since centuries before Banarasi's days. The *Skandapurana* records the following: Varanasi (from which 'Banaras' is derived), Kasi, Avimuktaka, Rudravasa, Anandakanana and Mahasamsana. The name Varanasi is of a topographical derivation, for the city lies between Varuna and Asi, two small tributaries of the Ganga. It is, along with Kasi, a very ancient name, and was in use during Vedic times when the region around it was held by an Aryan clan known as the Kasis. This clan name was used for the land as well as its capital, more specifically known as Varanasi.

Sivapuri, which Banarasi records as one of the names for Banaras, does not occur in the Puranic list. But it is in meaning and spirit not really different from the name

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Rudravasa, listed in the *Purana*. The city must have acquired this name—as well as the others found in the *Puranas*—when it became a great centre of Siva worship. The city has also been a holy place for the Jains since very early times, being associated with Parsvanatha, the twenty-third Tirthankara who lived in the 9th century B.C. Banarasi asserts that Sivapuri is a Jain and not a Saiva name. It appears that when the Saiva name, Sivapuri—the city of Siva—became too overwhelmingly grounded in usage to be ignored, the Jains sought to give this name a suitably Jain halo by providing it with a new etymology. This is clearly reflected in the manner in which Banarasi interprets and explains 'Sivapuri', calling it the name of the city where the Tirthankaras revealed the 'siva', the 'good' path. Etymologically analysing a name in such a way as to give it a desired turn of meaning has been a favourite pastime in India. Skill in it was almost a matter of course.

The *Kasikhanda* of the *Skandapurana*—which records the five names of Banaras given above—also, like Banarasi, gives 'reasons' why Banaras bore these different names. The *Purana* derives 'Kasi' from the Sanskrit root 'kas', 'to shine'. Kasi, it says, is the city where the supreme light of the godhead, surpassing words, shines.[1] The Puranic explanation of 'Kasi' is clearly similar in spirit to Banarasi's explanation of 'Sivapuri'. Interestingly, Meghavijaya, a Svetambara Jain monk who wrote during 1652–1730 A.D, and who has described Banaras in one of his poems, echoes the *Purana* in explaining the name 'Kasi', albeit with a suitably Jain twist: "The gods," he says, "flocked to Banaras when they heard of the imminent birth of Lord Parsva. The city thus became an

1 'kāśate'tra yato tadanākhyeyamīśvaram
ato nāmāparaṁ cāstu kāśiti prathitaṁ vibho.'
Skandapurana, Kasikhanda, 26, 27.
See also Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, Vol. IV, pp. 618–620.

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abode of bliss[1] and a radiant spiritual light began to spread in it and illumine the true path leading to the supreme Good (siva). Hence the city came to be known as Kasika—the Shining One.[2]

Meghavijaya's verse carries an idea remarkably parallel to Banarasi's. Both associate Banaras with Parsva and the good, siva path leading to salvation. The words in which the idea is expressed by these two Jain authors are also strikingly similar.[3] Meghavijaya knew of Banarasi and his works (he was a severe critic of Banarasi's heterodox opinions),[4] but what we have here need not be an instance of borrowing, either knowingly or unknowingly. It seems more likely that both authors have made use of an idea already current among Jains, for the Jains must surely have been offering their own Jainistic interpretation of the long-established Saiva names of Banaras much before the days of Banarasi and Meghavijaya.

Verses 3–8
madhyadesa

The term 'madhyadesa' has been in use for centuries to denote the central part of India. The geographical area meant by madhyadesa, however, never seems to have had a strict boundary. The word apparently indicated different regions in different times, not very exactly outlined, yet remaining within certain stable confines. The largest expanse allowed to madhyadesa is to be found in the *Manusmrti* which says that the land lying between the

1 The phrase Meghavijaya here has is : 'tenānandamayī purī samavasada.' The phrase is perhaps deliberately designed to suggestively include a Jain explanation for 'Ānandakānana' too, another old, Puranic name for Banaras.

2 Meghavijaya, *Digvijaya Mahakavyam*, 11, 86. The work has been published as No. 14 in the Singhi Jain Granthmala, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1945.

3 Meghavijaya says : 'vāṇārasī maṅgalairnityalokavikāśikā śivapadaṁ, nāmnāpyasau kāśikā', *op. cit., loc. cit.* This is comparable with *Ardhakathanaka* verse 2, line 1.

4 See Introduction and Appendix I for details about Meghavijaya.

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Himalayas in the north, the Vindhyas in the south, the city of Prayag (modern Allahabad) in the east and the Sarhind desert in the west is called madhyadesa. Fa Hien has clearly a more limited region in mind when he speaks of madhyadesa as the land south of Mathura. Al Biruni shifts it a little to the east, but again seems to be having a comparatively small area in mind, for he calls the country around Kanauj, madhyadesa.

Banarasi does not geographically define madhyadesa, yet he gives us two significant clues to his meaning. He speaks of Rohtak as lying in madhyadesa, and more significantly, tells us that he is using the language of madhyadesa for narrating his story.

Banarasi's language

The language Banarasi uses in his *Ardhakathanaka* is not a pure dialect belonging to a particular region, but a mixture containing usages ranging from eastern Punjab and Agra in the west to Jaunpur in the east. It has been characterised as an amalgam of Brajbhasa and Khariboli with some Bhojpuri usages.[1] Brajbhasa was the most widely accepted medium for literary expression in Hindi during Banarasi's days. Its home was the region around Mathura and Agra. Khariboli, which forms the core dialect of modern Hindi, was the colloquial speech of the area around Delhi-Karnal, including Rohtak; Bhojpuri belongs to the land around Banaras and Jaunpur, extending eastwards to Patna.

This linguistic map also marks the boundaries of the region in which Banarasi lived and travelled. Its dialects formed his speech. The language he uses for his narrative would have been readily understood all over this area, which,

1 For a more detailed description and analysis of Banarasi's language, see Nathuram Premi, ed. *Ardhakathanaka*, Introduction, pp. 15-21; also Ravindra Kumar Jain, *Kavivar Banarasidas* (Hindi), pp. 230-240.

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for him, evidently constituted the madhyadesa, though its boundaries must have remained only roughly defined in his mind. Interestingly, Banarasi's madhyadesa spans an area almost as wide as Manu's.

Verse 4 ends with the line 'kahon apni katha vikhyat,' which we have translated as: 'I take up my pen to make it (i.e. my story) public.' Literally speaking, Banarasi's line means: 'I will now relate my well-known tale.' This literal sense, however, does not convey Banarasi's intention, for what he had to narrate was certainly not a well-known story, and in verse 7 he himself speaks of his resolve to reveal what lies concealed. We are tempted to conclude that 'kahon' is perhaps an inadvertent scribal error for 'karon', which would give the desired meaning: 'I will now make my story public.' But there is a catch. The phrase 'kahon apni katha vikhyat' occurs again at the end of Banarasi's story in verse 667, plainly bearing the same purport as in verse 4. It would be odd for the same scribal error to be repeated twice with such a big gap in between. Yet we think our translation is on the right lines, even though the literal sense does not bear us out. The only justification we can offer is that 'kahon' may have been an oblique, idiomatic expression for 'karon' in Banarasi's time: but here again we cannot produce examples from the literature of his days to strengthen our case.

Srīmāls

The Srimal clan, to which Banarasi belonged, has a long and interesting history. The origin of the clan, like the origin of most clans, is shrouded in myth and mystery. All that may be gathered is that their earliest ancestors were connected with Bhinnamal, a town in western Rajasthan, known anciently as Srimal.[1] It was in Huen Tsang's days

1 The *Kharataragaccha Brhadgurvavali*, a collection of Jain chronicles belonging to the 14th century, calls the city Srīmāla (see pp. 49, 50, 55 of the Singhi Jain Mala edition of the text, pub. Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1956). Jinaprabha *Cont'd.* *

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a large and affluent town, the capital of Gujrat. Nathuram Premi cites two works, *Vimalaprabandha* and *Vimalacarita*, which record a legend that the Srimal clan was formed in the city of Srimal during the Dvapara age, the third age in the four-age time-cycle of the Hindus. The goddess Sri was the patron deity of the clan; hence the name Srimal. Other Jain traditions trace the Srimals to a king called Srimalla, who ruled over Srimal, giving his name to the city and the clan. These legends are, however, easily identifiable as not very imaginative examples of a common type of the myth of genesis in which the name of an object becomes the basis of a story explaining its origin. But they do indicate a definite connection between the town Srimal and the clan of Srimals.

The Srimals still form a big clan. They are mainly vaisyas: business–folk, tradesmen, though there are also brahman Srimals as well as sonars (goldsmiths). The vaisya Srimals are largely Jain, but there are Vaisnavas among them too. Banarasi says that the Srimals were Hindus before becoming converts to Jainism. Whether the Vaisnava Srimals are reconverts from Jainism or whether they belong to an older group who held on to their original faith is difficult to say. There is an interesting tradition in the *Srimala Purana*, a section of the *Skandapurana*, which records a prophecy that with the coming of the Kali age, the people of Srimal will embrace Jainism and the city will become denuded of its wealth and splendour.[1] It is, however, difficult to attach any date to this story. The city of Srimal was at the height

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*Contd.**Suri, writing in the same century, uses the same name for the city in his *Vividha Tirtha Kalpa*. See *Satyapura Tirtha Kalpa*, Kalpa no. 17 and *Caturvimsati Tirtha Nama Sangraha Kalpa*, Kalpa no. 45 (here the city has been called 'śrīmālapaṭṭana', 'paṭṭana' obviously being used as a synonym for 'pura' or 'city').

1 See Rasiklal Chotelal Parikh, *Gujratni Rajdhanio*, Ahmedabad, 1958, p. 108, where the relevant passage from the *Purana* has been quoted. Parikh's informative book is based on a series of lectures he delivered at the University of Bombay during 1950-51 on the subject of the ancient cities of Gujrat.

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of its glory between the 7th century, when Huen Tsang visited it, and the 9th, when according to another tradition, 18000 Gurjars marched out of it en bloc.[1]

Banarasi's story contains ample facts to suggest that by his time, Jain Srimal merchants had spread almost all over north India, with groups or communities in all commercially important towns and cities. Most of them were financiers as well as tradesmen with a penchant for dealing in precious stones. Some Srimals like Rai Dhana, a powerful divan (an officer-in charge of revenue collection) in Bengal, also held important administrative posts.

The Srimals had been of consequence for at least three or four centuries by Banarasi's time. A number of Jain sources are witness to their influence and affluence, the most revealing of which is the *Kharataragaccha Brhadgurvavali*, a chronicle recording, often with great circumstantial detail, the lives of the pontifs of the Kharataragaccha sect over a long period from the 12th to the 14th century.[2] Many Srimals number among the wealthiest devotees of this sect of Svetambara Jains.

The work describes many tirthayatras (journeys to holy places) which offer interesting information concerning this clan. Large contingents of Jains belonging to the Kharataragaccha made it a custom to join these tirthayatras as pilgrims. The journeys were often long, both in duration

1 *Ibid.*, p. 106.

2 *Kharataragaccha Brhadgurvavali*, Singhi Jain Granthmala, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, 1956.

This publication contains two texts: *Yugapradhanacarya Gurvavali* (in Sanskrit) and *Vrddhacarya Prabandhavali* (in Prakrit). The first work is more germane for our purpose; it contains accounts of ācāryas, beginning with Jineśvara Sūri (died 1110 A. D.) who was the head of the Kharataragaccha order of Jain monks in the early 12th century. The account ends with the year 1336 A. D., during the pontificate of Jinakusala Sūri.

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and the distance covered, taking months to complete and stretching over many towns and holy spots. Travel arrangements for entire contingents of pilgrims were supervised by the wealthiest and the most influential members of the sect who also bore much of the congregational expense.

Many Srimals figure prominently among these rich donors and leaders of community pilgrimages. It would be interesting to cite a few instances. In 1314 A.D., the sons of a Srimal named Manal, in association with their cousins Matha and Dhandhu, successfully led a huge congregation of pilgrims—travelling with as many as three hundred carts—to a distant and sacred temple at Phalaudi (Phalavardhi), despite the fact that Ajmer and its neighbourhood was troubled by hostile Muslim forces.[1] In A.D. 1318, the Srimal Thakkur Raj Achal persuaded the ruling king Qutub-ud-din Mubarak Shah to grant him a farman authorising him to lead a large contingent of co-religionists on a long pilgrimage to a number of holy shrines.[2] More illustrious was a Srimal named Dharma Singh who obtained for his father, Sri Rayapati, a farman in A. D. 1323 from Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq, the famous Muslim king of Delhi, not otherwise known for favouring non-Muslims, to lead a large contingent of Jains on a long pilgrimage to Shatrunjaya in Gujrat. Dharma Singh, the chronicle reports, wielded considerable influence at the court of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. Possibly, he held an official post of some importance since he is extolled as 'a man of consequence, honoured by the King and famed, even in foreign lands, for his wonderful deeds.'[3] Apparently, he produced the farman against considerable resistance from the Muslim nobles, who, the chronicle

1 *Kharataragaccha Brhadgurvavali*, p. 64.
2 *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67.
3 'rājamānyaprabhāvakavideśavikhyātodbhaṭacaritra,' *Ibid.*, p. 72.

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proudly proclaims, were awed at his achievement.[1] He was aided in his mission by a man named Neba, the chief vazir.[2] Dharma Singh was also able to secure for his father a royal battalion of Muslim troops to guard the pilgrims and escort them through Gujrat which was at that time being terrorized and oppressed by Muslim forces.[3]

Next year, in 1324 A.D., two rich Srimals from Delhi, Rudpala and Niba, made grand arrangements in association with other wealthy merchants for great festivities on the sacred occasion of installing a number of Tirthankara images in the temple of Santinatha at Sripattan (Patan).[4]

The Srimals shone not only as merchants but also as monks. The celebrated Jinaprabha Suri was a Srimal of the Tambi gotra (the sub-clan to which Banarasi's first two wives belonged) before being ordained as a monk.[5] According to Jain tradition, he was invited to Delhi from Daulatabad by Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq and greatly honoured by him.[6]

The Biholias

Banarasi himself, however, does not seem to have hailed from a famous influential and affluent Srimal family. His forefathers belonged to Biholi, which, he implies, was an obscure little village or town somewhere in the neighbourhood of Rohtak. From the deprecatory manner in which he

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1 'phurmāṇaṁ sakalāmīramalikaśirovadhūnanakārakam,' *Ibid.*, p. 72.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 72. 'Neba' is perhaps a distortion of Ubaid, the boon companion of Ghiyasuddin's son Jauna.

3 'tataḥ sthānāt mlecchasainyopadravāt sarvaśūnyāyāmajñātamārgāyāmapi surāṣṭrāyāṁ...śrīsaṅghasainyamukuṭakalpapracaṇḍaśāsanasādhuśrīrayapativaśīkṛtāsaṁkhyā mlecchānugamyamānamārgāḥ...,' *Ibid.*, p. 75.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 77.

5 *Vividha Tirtha Kalpa*, Bibliotheca Indica ed. pp. 160-166. A few Srimals also rose to great prominence in the court at Malwa. Their account follows in the note on verses 13-14.

6 *Kharataragaccha Brhadgurvavali*, pp. 93-94.

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refers to them, they do not appear to have been of much consequence. This village Biholi perhaps no longer exists. Nathuram Premi in a lengthy footnote quotes the researches of a citizen of Rohtak, who after much enquiry was able to locate a village named Biholi 70 miles from Rohtak in Panipat tehsil, district Karnal. Nathuram Premi also quotes information from a *Kaifiyat Bahi* of 1880 A.D. where it is recorded that this village had been in a deserted condition around 1440 A.D. when it was reinhabited by two Jat chieftains.[1] However, the Biholi of the *Kaifiyat Bahi* is rather far from Rohtak. It cannot be identified with any certainty as the ancestral home of the Biholias.

Rohtak

Rohtak, to which Banarasi's forefathers later moved, lies at a distance of about 70 miles to the northwest of Delhi at 28°55' N, 76°40' E. It is an ancient town and has been called Rohitaka in the *Mahabharata*. It was ruled between 150 B.C. and 350 A.D. by the Yaudheyas, who later came under the sway of the Guptas. The Pehove inscription of Bhoj, dated 880 A.D., testifies that Rohtak was at that time a part of the Gurjar-Pratihar empire. At the spread of Tomar rule, with its capital at Delhi, Rohtak became a part of this new kingdom.[2]

Fanshawe, in a report published in 1880 after extensive studies of the settlement patterns in the area, conjectures that it was during the Tomar period that many Rajput as well as Jat clans moved to it and made it their home. Banarasi tells us that his ancestors were Rajputs of royal blood before becoming converts of Jainism. They were, he says, defenders of Biholi who later came to be called Srimals because they took to wearing garlands inscribed with the mantra 'Sri'. Part of this story may perhaps have a grain of truth in it and the

1 *Ardhbkathanaka*, Introduction, p. 24. fn.
2 *Rohtak District Gazetteer*, Chandigarh, 1970, pp. 20-22.

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Srimals may have been Rajputs before becoming Jains and adopting trade as their vocation; though this goes against the evidence recorded in a verse in the *Srimala Purana* which says that a group or clan of people, significantly named the Srimalins, lived in the western and the northern quarters of the city of Srimal, the context implying that they were vaisyas.[1] The rest of Banarasi's story is certainly fanciful. The tradition, noted earlier, that the Srimals belonged to the ancient city of Srimal, is older, has stronger roots and is definitely more reliable, being more wide-spread. Biholi appears never to have been more than a minor town and bears no connection with the Srimals as a whole, as Banarasi implies. A stray Srimal group or family must have come and settled there a few generations before Banarasi, thus acquiring the surname Biholia. The story about the mantra 'Sri' and the sacred mala (garland) which Banarasi relates to account for the name Srimal, is clearly no more than a play on words.

It may, however, have a faint, forgotten support in history. The *Nisitha Curni*, a Jain text written by Jinadasa Gani in the 7th century, records that one of the ministers in a king's council of his days was called the 'sresthi'. He was an important businessman, representative of merchants and trading guilds of the state. This 'sresthi' was invested with a golden patta inscribed with the image of the goddess Sri as sign of office. This practice is likely to have been followed in Srimal, too. Jinadasa speaks of it as a general practice. He lived in western India where Srimal was one of the more important cities of his time, the capital of an important kingdom. Jinadasa was familiar with Srimal and names it as a famous centre of Brahmanic pilgrimage. The practice followed at Srimal may perhaps have been an instance leading Jinadasa to his generalisation. It is imaginable that the

1 Rasiklal Chotelal Parikh, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

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Srimal Jains had an ancestor or ancestors who once occupied the prestigious post of the sresthi and were granted a golden patta inscribed with the mantra 'Sri'—a fact which remained in the memory of later generations, albeit in a distorted manner.

We do not know when and under what circumstances Banarasi's forefathers came and settled in Biholi. Our knowledge of the history of the clan hardly embraces details of the kind which could enable us to trace the movements of a specific family or group.

We do, however, discern a pattern in the movement of the Srimals as a whole. They shifted the arena of their activity with change in the geography of political power and the resultant rise of new centres of commerce. They left Srimal as that ancient city declined and we find them later inhabiting important cities of the Chahman empire with its capital at Ajmer, as the testimony of the *Kharataragaccha Brhadgurvavali* reveals. We gather from the same source that many of them moved to Delhi when that city became the seat of power with the establishment of Muslim rule. By Banarasi's time they had shifted further eastwards, entrenching themselves in the important cities of Mughal India. It must have been during one of these movements, perhaps in Chahman times, that some Srimals thought it expedient to make Biholi their home.

Speaking of the adoption of Jainism by Srimals, Banarasi says: "te gurumukh jaini bhaye/tyagi karam adbhut." For 'adbhut'—literally 'strange', 'wonderful'—there is an alternative reading : 'aghabhut'. What Banarasi wants to convey is that having become Jains, his ancestors, who had hitherto been Rajputs, gave up killing and warfaring. The word 'adbhut' in his sentence should be understood as meaning 'awe-inspiring': the Rajputs, he means to

Verse 9

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say, gave up their awe-inspiring war-like deeds. 'Adbhut' replaced by 'aghabut' would express this idea somewhat differently. 'Aghabhut' literally means 'sinful'; Banarasi's words thus would mean: 'the Rajputs gave up their earlier sinful deeds'; in other words, they gave up war and the vocation of killing, which for Jains is the most heinous, 'awful' sin.

Verse 10
gotra

Banarasi tells us that his gotra was Biholia, a name derived from the village from which his forefathers hailed. His use of the word 'gotra' seems almost synonymous with the modern 'surname'. It is conspicuously different from the ancient usage in which the gotra of a brahman was the name of the rishi from whom his lineage was traced. The gotra of a non-brahman was often the gotra of his purohit—his brahman priest hereditarily attached to his family; though some purely ksatriya gotras were also known.[1]

Later, the use of the word 'gotra' often came to denote the name of one's clan or family (kula), a usage closer to what we could call a surname. A copper plate of the Kadamba king Krishnavarma mentions a merchant (srestin) whose gotra was Tuthiyal—clearly a gotra meant purely as an identifying name for a clan or a family without implying any link with ancient sages. Using the word to a similar end, a sudra king, the Reddy Allayavena, declares himself to be of the Polvala gotra.[2] Banarasi's usage of 'gotra' is akin to these latter usages; what he means by gotra is the identifying name of the sub-clan of Srimals to which he belonged.

The derivation of Srimal gotra names is quite varied. Biholia was, obviously, derived from the name of a village. Cinaliya and Badaliya, two other Srimal gotras occurring in

1 Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, (Hindi translation), Hindi Samiti, Lucknow, Vol. I, p. 289.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 290.

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the *Ardhakathanaka*, seem to have been similarly derived. Others mentioned by Banarasi, such as Kukari, Khobra, Dhor, Tambi, Mothiya and Sindharh, appear to have been differently derived, but in what manner, we do not know. In addition to these, there are over a hundred other gotra names among the Srimals.

Though the meaning of the word had changed, a gotra still marked a group of kins among whom marriage was forbidden.

Verses–13–14
Srīmāls in Malwa

Muldas, we are told, went into service under a Mughal noble (amir). He was certainly not the first Srimal to serve a Muslim chief. Earlier too, as we have noted,[1] there were Srimals who had perhaps taken up service with Muslim rulers. In Malwa itself, where Muldas went to live and serve, we hear of some illustrious Srimals before him who held important offices in the court. A Srimal named Punjaraja (circa 1500 A.D.) held the influential position of a minister in the court of the Muslim ruler at Mandu, the capital of Malwa. Before Punjaraja, his uncle Megha had also been a minister at the Malwa court and Ghiyasuddin Khilji had reportedly bestowed upon him the title of Mafarmalik. Still earlier, during the years 1400-1448 A.D., Mandana, another Srimal of the Kharataragaccha, had been minister in the court at Mandu under a ruler he calls Alam Shah. It is likely that Mandana was a forefather of Punjaraja.[2]

We are tempted to speculate that Banarasi's family was perhaps related to these powerful Srimals of Malwa, but this

1 See notes on verses 3–8.

2 P. K. Gode, 'Maṇḍana, the Prime Minister of Malwa, and his works between 1400–1448 A.D,' *The Jain Antiquary*, January 1946. Maṇḍana was a learned man, versed in many disciplines. Of his works we have two poems : the *Kavyamandana* and the *Srngaramandana*, besides the *Sangitamandana*, a work on music.

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seems too far-fetched; for had this been true, Banarasi would surely have proclaimed the fact himself.

modī

Muldas was a 'modi': a word derived from the Arabian 'madd'aa': 'an article', 'a commodity.' A derivation from the Sanskrit 'modaka': 'a kind of sweetmeat', has also been suggested but seems improbable. In current parlance the word means a grocer, a provision merchant. Earlier, the word was used for persons appointed by rich nobles to look after the various needs of their households, such as buying provisions and appointing domestic staff and generally managing affairs. A modi in a rich household could find many opportunities for making money, and the post was greatly coveted. Muldas, it appears, managed the affairs of his employer in a still larger sense, for he had charge of his employer's money-lending business.

However, the line 'muldas saun bahut kripal/kare ucapati saunpe mal' which we have translated as: 'having his trust, he conducted a profitable business of money-lending on his behalf,' can be interpreted differently. It can be also translated as '[The Mughal chief] was very kind to Muldas, who ran a thriving business in money-lending, handing over [part of] his profits to his master.' Our own interpretation is, we think, closer to the author's purport, for otherwise it becomes difficult to explain how Muldas could be called an employee of the Mughal. For if Muldas ran a business of his own, giving part of his profits to the Mughal, how was he in the Mughal's employ ? Moreover, on what ground, then, did the Mughal feel justified in seizing Muldas' property at his death ?

Verses 15–22
Narwar

Narwar (25°39' N, 77°56' E) is a town about fifty miles to the south of Gwalior. It has an ancient fort commanding a hill, which in Abul Fazl's days, when the town was the capital of a sarkar (a provincial sub-division) in the suba

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(province) of Agra, still had temples dating back to the Hindu period.[1] Cunningham identifies the town with the ancient Padmavati, a city which, according to the *Puranas*, was ruled by the Nagas. Coins and inscriptions of Ganapati, who has been described as a Naga king in Samudragupta's Allahabad inscription, have been found here.

Muldas' employer

Following the invasion of Timur in A.D. 1399, Narwar fell to Tomar Rajputs who held it till A.D. 1506, when Sikandar Lodi conquered it after a twelve-month siege. Like nearby Gwalior, Narwar was a great centre of Jainism during medieval times. Its political history, too, like its cultural history, is closely linked with that of Gwalior, which was held by the Afghan, Tatar Khan Sarangkhani, when Babur became king at Agra. A Gwalior raja whom Babur calls Dharmankat, acting in league with an Afghan, styling himself as Khanejahan, set seige on Tatar Khan. Thus cornered, Tatar Khan offered to surrender Gwalior to Babur, who despatched one of his chiefs, Rahimdad, with a number of men to take possession of the fort. The men of Rahimdad's contingent were each assigned certain parganas (districts) in the Gwalior region as jagirs before being sent off on the expedition.[2] Tatar Khan handed over Gwalior to Rahimdad, though not before making a last-minute attempt at treachery, and Babur's men apparently received their allotted share of land. Babur does not tell us the name of the amir to whose lot Narwar fell as a jagir; the man was presumably not important enough to be named.

Babur's conquest of Gwalior occured late in 1526 A.D. And we can imagine—for definite records are lacking—that the amir who had received Narwar as jagir continued to hold it under Humayun, when Muldas joined his service.

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1 *Ain-i-Akbari* (tr. Jarrett) Vol. 2, p. 201.

2 *Babur Nama* (tr. A. S. Beveridge), p. 539.

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However, the dates noted by Banarasi in this context pose some problems. Muldas' first son, he says, was born in 1551 A.D.[1]; the second was born two years later and died after three years in 1556 A.D. Muldas, too, died during the same year. His employer, who, according to Banarasi, was attached to Humayun's court, immediately seized Muldas' house and property.

Banarasi's story here clashes with recorded history. The years 1551 to 1556 A. D. are part of a period when Humayun was not ruling in India. He had been superceded by the Surs. The ruler of Hindustan from A.D. 1551 to 1554 was Islam Shah Sur, son of Sher Shah Sur who had dethroned Humayun in A.D. 1540, forcing him into a prolonged exile. Islam Shah's rule was followed by two short reigns, those of Firoz Shah (1554 A. D.) and Muhammad Adil Shah. It was only by the middle of 1556 A.D., during Muhammad Adil Shah's rule, that Humayun succeeded in regaining the throne he had lost to Sher Shah.

With Humayun's defeat, the jagirs held by his men must certainly have passed into the hands of Sher Shah's nobles. Some shrewd, politically adroit and tenacious men of the old regime might have succeeded in winning the favour of the new king and in retaining their jagirs. But this is extremely unlikely in the case of Narwar, which commanded a crucial pass on the route to Malwa from Agra. It does not seem plausible that such a strategic town would have been allowed to remain with a man of the old regime. Sher Shah was a shrewd king, very cautious and vigilant in choosing men to whom he granted jagirs. Islam Shah further tightened central control over his far-flung empire. He had, moreover, almost made Gwalior his imperial seat, bringing Narwar all the

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 16-17.

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more closer to the centre. Prolonged military campaigns were carried out in Malwa by both Sher Shah and Islam Shah. They would not have allowed a noble from the enemy court of Humayun to hold Narwar.

Banarasi's dates

How then are we to reconcile Banarasi's story with his dates ? It may be urged that Banarasi is mistaken in his dates. Dr. Mata Prasad Gupta, in his edition of the *Ardhakathanaka*, has pointed out quite a few of Banarasi's errors in this respect. The date Banarasi gives for his father Kharagsen's birth is the fifth of the bright half of the month of Sravana, 1608 Vikram (1551 A.D.); he adds that the day was a Sunday. According to Dr. Mata Prasad's calculations, the day on that date must have been either a Wednesday or a Friday (depending on which of the two possible almanacs one follows in making the calculations). Banarasi makes a similar mistake about the day of his birth. He reports that he was born on another Sunday. But Dr. Mata Prasad's calculations reveal that the day on the date noted by Banarasi must have been either a Tuesday or a Thursday. He adds that the positions of the planets which Banarasi gives for the hour in which he was born are also incorrect. Dr. Mata Prasad has pointed out similar inaccuracies in two other dates noted by Banarasi, and was of the opinion that the errors were due to the inadvertance of a poor copyist. In preparing his addition of the *Ardhakathanaka*, Dr. Mata Prasad had not been able to avail himself of more than two manuscripts. Others have now been discovered, yet the errors still remain: the copyists, apparently, were not at fault.

But the fact that a few of Banarasi's dates do not match their corresponding days cannot be reason enough to conclude that Banarasi's sense of chronology was so imprecise as to be incorrect by a matter of years (allowing that Dr.

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Mata Prasad's calculations are correct). In fact, Banarasi shows a sound sense of chronology in recording major political events which occurred during his life-time. He has correctly noted, for example, the time of Akbar's death and that of Jahangir.

Yet when it comes to events lying in a past beyond what he could have directly known, Banarasi's chronology does begin to falter. His brief sketch of the history of Jaunpur—as we shall see a little later[1]—is full of confusions and anachronisms. He was obviously not a careful student of the past and relied solely on oral traditions for his knowledge. His account, consequently, exhibits the weaknesses typical of such records.

Yet this should not lead us to think that dates from his family history are equally suspect. To be mistaken about public history is one thing but to be mistaken about the not-too-remote history of one's own family is quite another. Dates in the history of his own family were certainly more intimately stamped on his mind. Dates such as the year Banarasi's father was born or the year his grandfather died must have been preserved in the family with a care rarely expended on public events of the past, especially those that no longer affected the day-to-day business of life. Banarasi's father and grandmother lived to a ripe old age, and the years they spent at Narwar, culminating in a sudden, raw tragedy must have remained alive and vivid in their minds throughout their lives. Besides, Banarasi had easy access to a surer guide in this matter. Following common custom, his family evidently maintained horoscopes. Banarasi gives us his own in some detail. He had only to look up his father's to ascertain the dates when his grandfather Muldas served under the Mughal.

1 See notes on verses 24-37.

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But if we are to argue that the dates in Banarasi's family history are correct, how do we explain the transparent historical error they embody? The explanation, I think, is that though the family dates are correct, they have been muddleheadedly associated with the wrong public events. The reason for this may be the following.

Banarasi was recording his story in A.D. 1641, when Shah Jahan was ruling in full glory, heir to a dynasty that had held supreme, unchallenged power for long decades, longer than the course of time beyond which living memory cares to excavate with exactitude. The episode of Afghan rule which interrupted the earlier part of Mughal reign must have become so overshadowed in public memory by the living colossus of the present empire, as to have become a forgotten episode. Who except the historically keen, which Banarasi certainly was not, would have cared to recall that a break had occurred in Humayun's rule ?

But if Muldas did not serve Humayun, whom did he serve ? On the basis of Banarasi's dates we can only conclude that Muldas' master must have been a nobleman belonging to the Afghan, Sur court.

Kharagsen was born in A.D. 1551, and his mother left Narwar with him a little more than five years later in A.D. 1556, the year the Afghans lost the crucial battle of Panipat. Their power began fast disintegrating, but they held on for some time in many small pockets. Gwalior remained in the control of Bahbal Khan, a noble who had served under Muhammad Adil Shah, the last Sur king, and fell to Akbar only in A.D. 1558. It took Akbar three more years to subdue the whole of Malwa. The political fate of Narwar had always been tied to Gwalior and it must have come into Mughal hands after A.D. 1558.

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The amir who seized Muldas' property must have soon lost his own estates to an amir from the court of Humayun's son.

Verse 23

Kharagsen's mother, travelling with the five-year old Kharagsen, must have had a harrowing time in her 300-mile journey from Narwar to Jaunpur. Her difficulties must have been aggravated by the political upheavals of the period, with the Mughal armies constantly on the move in order to subdue the remaining strongholds of enemy power. Chunar, where the last Afghan king had entrenched himself, was not very far from Jaunpur.

Yet we can surely imagine mitigating factors. The Srimals were spread all over North India and they formed a close-knit clan cemented together by a strong sense of community. Mother and son must have found friendly shelter in many Srimal homes during their long journey.

Verses 24–37
Jaunpur

Jaunpur, which was to be the home of Banarasi's family for many coming decades, lies at 25°45'N, 82°41'E on the banks of the Gomti, to the northwest of Banaras. Today it is a small, little-known town except for its fine, distinctive mosques dating from Sharqi times. Yet, for almost a hundred years from the end of the 14th century to the end of the 15th, it rivalled Delhi in power, affluence and glory.

The city was founded by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in A.D. 1359, when he was on his way to Bengal. He named it after his cousin Sultan Muhammad, also known as Jauna Shah; hence the name Jaunpur. Jaunpur soon grew into an important city, first as the headquarters of a provincial government and then as the seat of an independent empire.

The site itself is ancient. On the mound where the Jaunpur fort now stands, there stood a large temple built by

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Vijayachandra of Kanauj in A.D. 1168. Firoz Shah pulled the temple down and used the stones for constructing the fort. Other ancient structures standing on the site were also demolished, the destruction being so complete that hardly a vestige of them remains. The stones from ancient buildings were used to erect new Muslim monuments. The masons followed the now established practice of turning the carved or inscribed faces of the older material inwards. The *Jaunpur Gazetteer* strikes a somewhat rueful note in reporting: "It is no exaggeration to say that the early history of the town lies hidden in the walls of the grand mosques of the Sharqi dynasty."[1]

The history of Jaunpur in early times seems to have been closely connected with that of Zafarabad, a town situated on the right banks of the river Gomti at a distance of about five miles from Jaunpur. The old name of the town was Manaich, still preserved in a village two miles to its north. The *Jaunpur Gazetteer* remarks that there is reason for believing that the existence of Zafarabad as a city goes back at least to Buddhist times.[2] Muhammad Ghazni, it is believed, captured it from Chandrapala, the ruler of Banaras, forcibly storming the old fort of Ratagarh which overlooked the town. Later, Muhammad-bin-Sam stormed Asni, a new and larger fortress built by Jaichandra. During A.D. 1321, Sakat Singh Gaharwad, who then held the town, was defeated by Zafar, the third son of Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq. The name of the town was changed to Zafarabad and it was made the seat of a provincial government which it remained till Firoz Shah founded Jaunpur.

Jaunpur and Zafarabad were situated so close to each other that they could hardly have existed as equally flourish-

1 p. 145.
2 p. 330.

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ing towns simultaneously. We can gather from their history that they alternated in importance, so that when one was in a state of ascension, the other declined, the process being reversed on more occasion than one.

Jaunpur became the seat of a glorious independent kingdom under the Sharqi Sultans—the 'Sultans of the East'—from A.D. 1394 to A.D. 1476–1477, the year when Bahlol Lodi reannexed it to the Delhi empire.

Banarasi's history of Jaunpur

The genealogy of Sharqi Sultans forms the core of Banarasi's brief chronology of Jaunpur kings, though he also has names of a few rulers before and after. His account is avowedly based on oral tradition and displays all the shortcomings of such accounts: the names of the kings are distorted, often beyond recognition, their chronological order is convoluted or confused and the duration of their rule is misreported.

It must, however, be admitted that Banarasi himself was not too sure of the veracity of what he was reporting and confesses that it was no more than hearsay. But he hardly seems to have been really interested in the true dynastic history of Jaunpur. His main purport in writing at some length about Jaunpur was clearly to evoke in his readers the impression of a city, affluent and imposing, with an equally imposing past. His aim was literary and aesthetic, not historical.

It would, however, be instructive to put Banarasi's history of Jaunpur to a little detailed scrutiny, examining it in the light of more accurate accounts as a kind of object-lesson in the ways of oral, folk-history.

Let us begin with a brief outline of the chronology of the period of which Banarasi is speaking. The Tughlaq king

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Firoz Shah, who had founded the city, died in A.D. 1388. Malik Sarwar, his powerful vazir, was appointed governor of Jaunpur in A.D. 1394. Taking advantage of a weak and crumbling centre, Malik Sarwar set himself up as a virtually independent ruler. Sarwar (who was a eunuch) died in A.D. 1399 and was succeeded by his adopted son Qaranful who ascended the throne under the princely title of Sultan Mubarak Shah. He threw off his father's pretense of honouring the suzerainty of Delhi and began to rule with the full paraphernalia of kingship.

Mubarak died in A.D. 1402. After him, his brother Ibrahim was raised to the throne as Shamsuddin Ibrahim. His was a glorious reign. Under him Jaunpur became a great centre of learning, culture and the arts, rivalling Delhi in esteem as well as power and dominion. Ibrahim indeed had ambitions of adding Delhi to his empire, but was thwarted in the attempt.

Ibrahim died after a long and prosperous rule in A.D 1440 and was succeeded by his eldest son Mahmud Shah, who ruled for seventeen years. During Mahmud's rule, in A.D. 1451, Bahlol Lodi ascended the throne of Delhi to found a new dynasty. Resenting the overlordship of the impetuous Afghan upstart, some recalcitrant nobles of the old regime invited Mahmud to invade Delhi. This initiated a long struggle between the two empires, ending in the ultimate annihilation of Sharqi rule in Jaunpur. Mahmud Shah died in A.D. 1457, after years of unsuccessful war against Delhi. He was succeeded by his son Bhikan, who assumed power under the princely name Muhammad Shah. The new king could not rule for more than a few months, for his title to the throne was immediately challenged by his brothers, one of whom, Husain Khan, killed him and became king in A.D. 1458.

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Husain proved to be the last Sharqi ruler of Jaunpur. He concluded a treaty with Delhi immediately after his ascension to the throne, promising to maintain peace for at least four years. In A.D. 1469, a few years after the treaty had expired, he marched against Bahlol at the instigation of his Syed queen (a daughter of the family overthrown by Bahlol) and almost stormed the capital. But he was routed on the verge of victory, and was forced to face a shattering, disgraceful defeat, his wives and family being held captive. Yet he managed to escape to Jaunpur. His family was respectfully sent back by Bahlol.

Next year, again at the instigation of his queen, he made another march towards Delhi, only to suffer another defeat. But he did not give up and soon made another attempt, which, too, was unsuccessful.

In A.D. 1479, he made yet another march towards Delhi. This time he suffered total defeat and Bahlol conquered his kingdom. All that remained with Husain was a petty principality in Bihar, with which Bahlol generously did not interfere.

Bahlol made his son Barbak governor of Jaunpur. Sikandar succeeded Bahlol in A. D. 1489. He allowed Barbak to continue as governor of Jaunpur. Husain had not yet given up hope of regaining his lost kingdom. He instigated Barbak to rebel. Barbak rose in insurrection but was quickly subdued, pardoned and reinstated. Husain induced him to revolt again. He rose up in arms against his brother a second time and was totally crushed. Husain fled to Bengal (in A.D. 1494), where he spent his last days in obscurity. His rule over Jaunpur had lasted nineteen years.

Let us now come to Banarasi's king-list. It begins with Jauna Shah, referring clearly to Muhammad Tughlaq,

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after whom the city was named. The association of his name with Jaunpur was, evidently, reason enough to stamp him in popular imagination as the founding-ruler of the city, though, in fact, the city was founded after his death.

The second name on Banarasi's list is Bawakkar Shah. 'Bawakkar' is obviously a colloquial distortion, perhaps, of 'Barbak', and refers, surely, to Firoz Shah Tughlaq who was also known as Firoz Barbak. 'Surhar', the third name in Banarasi's list, is again a vernacular mutation of 'Sarwar', which was the name of the first Sharqi ruler of Jaunpur.

The other names present a puzzle. Some are impossible to identify, having no resemblance with the known names of the Sharqi kings. The order of the names is also topsy-turvy. Ibrahim, who has been transformed to Birahim, occurs as the sixth in Banarasi's list, after Dost Muhammad and Shah Nizam, who are named as successors of Sarwar, whereas, in fact, Ibrahim had followed Mubarak, who had succeeded Sarwar. Ibrahim, in Banarasi's list, is followed anachronistically by Husain, the last Sharqi ruler.

The fourth name on Banarasi's list is that of Dost Muhammad, a name not to be found in the chronicles. The two known names it could possibly point to are Mahmud Shah and Muhammad Shah. Muhammad Shah's rule was extremely short-lived and it is less likely for him to have survived in public memory than Mahmud, the successor of Ibrahim, who had a long reign of seventeen years. Dost Muhammad may have been a popular designation for him. Banarasi lists him before Ibrahim, though in fact he came after.

Husain, in Banarasi's list, is followed by Gazi Sajjit Sen, a strange name bearing no resemblance to any in the

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chronicles. Sajjit Sen indeed is a name which would stand out as peculiar in any list of Muslim kings. The term 'Gazi', however, is familiar and perhaps may point to Bahlol Lodi, who on coming to power had assumed the title of Gazi: 'the Crusader'. But we are unable to find any reference to him as Sajjit Sen. In truth, the juxtaposition of the virulently Muslim 'Gazi' with the Hindu name 'Sajjit Sen' is doubly baffling.

Bahlol was followed on the throne by Sikandar, who was also known as Nizam Khan. The name Shah Nizam, fifth on Banarasi's list, may perhaps be a misplaced reference to him.

The last name Banarasi has is Bakhia Sultan. We know of no ruler with this somewhat odd appellation. The name might refer to Sikandar's brother Barbak, who was appointed governor of Jaunpur after Bahlol conquered it, though there are no clues pointing to this identification.

Banarasi tells us that his chronology covers a period of three hundred years. But in A. D. 1641, the year Banarasi completed his *Ardhakathanaka*, the city of Jaunpur was only a little more than 250 years old. Banarasi's genealogy, moreover, has no names after the reign of Sikandar Lodi, who died in 1517, and thus his king-list really covers a period of no more than 150 years.

Jaunpur continued to be a part of the Lodi dominions till the death of Ibrahim Lodi, the grandson of Bahlol, who died fighting Babur at Panipat in A. D. 1526. During the ensuing political upheavals, Bahadur Khan, who had hitherto been the governor of Jaunpur, asserted his independence and established a short-lived kingdom till it was captured by Humayun. With the rise of the Surs, Jaunpur passed into their hands and continued under them till Akbar regained it

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for the Mughal empire in A. D. 1560 through his vazir and general, Khankhana Ali Quli Khan. Under Akbar, Jaunpur remained the chief town of a large suba (province) till A. D. 1575, when the provincial capital was shifted to Allahabad. Subsequently, Jaunpur declined in importance, becoming a sarkar or sub-province in the suba of Allahabad.

Banarasi speaks of the domain of Jaunpur as extending upto Patna in the east, Etawa in the west, the river Ghaggar in the north and the Vindhyas in the south. Only during Sharqi rule was Jaunpur the capital of such a large kingdom. As a sarkar under Allahabad, it had lost much of its earlier splendour although it still remained a comparatively prosperous town,[1] and the head of a large district. A number of Sharqi mosques, which had survived the fierce destruction of the town by Bahlol Lodi, gave it an imposing sky-line. The city also had many celebrated madarsas—centres of Islamic learning—established during Sharqi days, though these, like everything else in Jaunpur, were also on the decline.

It is difficult to ascertain how much of Banarasi's description of Jaunpur reflects a true contemporary picture. It is a short, superficial sketch consisting of nothing but a motley list of items : classes of people, types of buildings and a denumerable quantity of landmarks. As a portrait it hardly amounts to much; the only portion which displays some liveliness is perhaps the short verse on the river Gomti.

Moreover, some of his facts are transparently fanciful, even in the extremely brief sketch we have. The list enumerating fifty-two landmarks of various kinds is certainly not a report of what existed then but obviously a nostalgic memory of bygone days. We know that during

1 *Ain-i-Akbari*, (tr. H. S. Jarrett), Vol. II, p. 170.

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Banarasi's days, Jaunpur did not have fifty two parganas (administrative sub-divisions); nor, shrunk in size as it was, could it have had fifty two mandis, bazars and sarais.

More remarkable are Banarasi's omissions. We curiously observe that he makes no mention of the mosques and maktabs (Muslim schools of learning) which must have conspicuously dominated the city-scape. Equally strange is the fact that in speaking of the people who lived in the city, he is silent about the Muslim population, who, being rulers, must have been quite as conspicuous.

To understand his strange omissions we must look at Banarasi's portrayal of the city in the light of the literary tradition within which he was writing. It was, in his days, an established practice among Hindi poets to follow certain fixed guidelines in describing a standard subject such as a city, guidelines which had, indeed, been reduced to conventional formulae and set phrases. Poetic practice sanctioned and encouraged the use of itemized, ready-made lists of objects and things to be named in projecting the idea of a large and prosperous city. Such lists were known to every poet, imbibed as a matter of course from the usage of other poets as well as manuals of poetry or phrase books designed for the purpose.[1] These conventional lists were generally quite old and antedated the Muslim period, hardly taking into account such alterations in the city-scape or city life as the introduction of the mosque or the Muslim population.

But why, we may still ask, did Banarasi insert a fanciful, stylized piece of description in a story avowedly meant to conform to real life ? Why did he allow himself to be swayed by fossilized convention in an otherwise realistic

1 One such phrase-book is the well-known *Sabhasrngara*, published by the Nagari Pracharini Sabha, Varanasi.

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account ? It is, one would be inclined to conclude, a serious deviation from his own, self-imposed aim, and, as such, a grievous flaw. Let us, however, beware of being hastily led by the presumption that Banarasi was trying to project a realistic picture of the town he grew up in, but failed because, blinded by convention, he went about it in the wrong way. In truth, Banarasi's purpose in this passage was not descriptive but evocative and he was using standard technique for his purpose.

As he begins to talk of Jaunpur, we can tangibly feel him disengaging himself from the main flow of his narrative. He pauses to impress upon his readers the glories of the city he grew up in. The method he employes to create the desired effect is not representational; it is stylized: rather like creating a city in arabesque, using a set, abstract design with traditional motifs. To a modern reader this approach may seem odd, especially since its evocative power is lost in translation, but for Banarasi's public it was a familiar method. It had similarities with music, aiming at expression without portrayal.

The musical element in Banarasi's passage on Jaunpur becomes all the more explicit in verse 29, which is a rhymed list in the kabitta metre of thirty-six sudra classes, called paunis, who were all allegedly living in the town. In its content, the verse is no more than a dry series of names. But they are woven with great skill into a rhythmic, sonorous metre, to considerable musical effect.

We have omitted this verse from our translation, for the name-list without the music could only have cluttered the passages irritatingly. The paunis have been discussed later in these notes.

Let us come now to the various items included in Banarasi's description. He speaks of Jaunpur as containing

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the following kinds of buildings and structures: matha, mandapa, prasada (palace), saptakhane grha (mansions divided into seven distinct compartments, each with its own courtyard) and shamianas with flags flying over them.

maṭha

A matha was a religious establishment where sanyasis lived. It was akin to a monastery and was often attached to a temple. During the final phase of the Hindu era, mathas were big, influential institutions, serving as centres of learning and culture, besides religious activity. By Banarasi's days they had shrunk considerably in size and power, though a number of them still continued with the patronage of rich, influential devotees and even, at times, the Muslim royalty. It is unlikely that there were any large, important mathas in Jaunpur during Sharqi times or later. In speaking of them as conspicuous landmarks, Banarasi was obviously copying convention rather than reporting a fact.

maṇḍapa

A mandapa is a pavilion–like structure on pillars usually open on the four sides. One may see large multi–pillared mandapas used for dance, music, religious discourse and other such activity attached to many medieval temples. Mandapas, known as baradari in Hindi, were also built as public conveniences overlooking ponds or rivers, or in plazas, market–places, gardens and similar public areas for people to take shelter, rest, play or gossip in. Such mandapas may still be seen in many old towns.

prāsāda

The prasada or royal palace at Jaunpur has not survived. The Sharqi palace was a grand edifice matching the splendour of the kingdom. It was sacked and razed to the ground by Bahlol. The existing prasada in Banarasi's days must have been a more modest structure, but the memory of the older palace must also have still been alive. Banarasi's 'prasada' perhaps refers to this grand, bygone structure.

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A description of the older Sharqi palace has fortunately been preserved in the avahattha poem *Kirtilata* by Vidyapati. This renowned poet from Mithila had visited Jaunpur during the reign of Ibrahim Sharqi. His description of the palace is quite graphic and strongly reminiscent of the familiar Mughal palaces at Agra and Delhi.

We quote his interesting description:

"O what a wondrous sight," he begins. "Beyond the guards stationed at the outer gates is a stretch of open ground, at the end of which one can espy the royal buildings. The doorway leading to them is called the dar–sadar: 'the palace door'. Inside are the darigah (Persian 'dargah', forecourt), the varigah (persian 'bargah', the hall of audience), nimajgah (the place for namaz or prayer, perhaps the king's private mosque),the khwargah (Persian 'khargah', the dining hall) and the khoramgah (Persian 'khurramgah', the living room or the bed–chamber). The royal edifices strike strange wonder in the heart of the beholder, eliciting a spontaneous burst of praise. Attached to the palace are gardens with beds for flowers in bloom, ornamental water–ways, artificial hills (krida–saila), fountains, large raised platforms (visrama-caura), mechanical fans, groves for lovers, bowers covered with madhavi creepers and other objects of beauty and pleasure. A huge crowd waits at the closed gates desiring audience with the king, imploring and bribing the sentries to find out what is happening within. But who can ever know what goes on in royal chambers ?"[1]

saptkhane gṛha

The expression 'saptakhane grha' in Banarasi refers to the large sprawling mansions of the rich which often had apartments built around as many as seven interconnected open courtyards: the number seven, of course, was just a

1 *Kirtilata*, with the *Sanjivani* commentary of V. S. Agrawal, Jhansi, 1962, pp. 133-148.

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figurative term for 'many'. Mansions built on a similar plan were already known in Gupta times. Vasantasena's house in Sudraka's *Mrcchakatikam* also had seven compartments. Large homes, known as havelis, with a similar layout may be seen even today in old cities such as Jaipur. These are often multi-storied as well as multi-compartmental.

shāmiānās

Shamianas or tents must have been a common sight in many cities of the day. Military personnel and troops lived mostly in tents on camping grounds, which, to judge from miniature paintings of the times, often looked like a sea of multi-coloured shamianas, each with a flag fluttering over it.

It is more likely, however, that Banarasi in naming shamiana as a part of the city-scape, is pointing not to military tents, but to canopies or shamiana–like pavilions on the roof-tops, verandahs or courtyards of large mansions, another common feature of the contemporary townscape. Both Mughal and Rajasthani miniature paintings can give us a vivid idea of how these gaily coloured canopies looked on houses.

In verse 31, Banarasi speaks of fifty-two parganas, sarais, mandis and bazars in and around Jaunpur. He was patently quoting a popular description handed down from more affluent days. Yet, like other towns, Jaunpur in Banarasi's days, too, must have had its share of sarais, mandis and bazars, even though not as many as fifty–two.

sarāi

A near English equivalent for 'sarai' would be 'inn'; but we have desisted from using 'inn' for 'sarai', since some European travellers who visited India during the 16th and 17th centuries have noted how different the two were.[1]

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1 See, for example, Francois Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire* (during A.D. 1656-1668), p. 233. The author disparagingly contrasts the filth and hardships of a sarai—where hundreds of men, he says, are seen mingled with their horses—with the comforts of a well-kept French inn. Bernier's diatribe was perhaps inspired not only by discomfort but also homesickness. Yet the sarai was not organised or maintained exactly as an inn.

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'Sarai' is a Persian word originally meaning 'palace' or 'edifice'. But according to Hobson Jobson: 'the usual modern meaning in Persia, and the only one in India, is that of a building for the accommodation of travellers, with their pack animals, consisting of an enclosed yard with chambers around.' Humble sarais, built of mud and straw, were to be found all over the country, many of them tended by resident couples. Sarais near larger cities were more spacious and built of stone or brick. An early example, known as Arab Sarai still stands in Delhi near Humayun's tomb. This was built by Akbar's mother, Haji Begum, and could house three hundred persons.

Peter Mundy, in his travels during A.D. 1632, stayed in a huge sarai near Agra built by Nur Jahan and called Nur Mahal ki Sarai, which could accommodate as many as 3000 men and 500 horses. Mundy commends its rooms, which were beautifully arched with cupola–like roofs. In another sarai, called Saif Khan ki Sarai, Mundy discovered that one could rent rooms on a monthly basis and that warehousing facilities were also available. There were, in Mundy's days, more than thirty large sarais on the much–travelled Agra-Patna road.[1]

bazar
maṇḍī

'Bazar' is the word for a market-place. 'Mandi' is sometimes interchangeable with 'bazar' but more specifically it means a wholesale market devoted to one particular commodity.

pauni

Earlier, we remarked that we had omitted from our translation a verse in which Banarasi dexterously and resonantly weaves the names of thirty-six paunis (sudras). Here is the list of paunis he names :

1 For greater details on 'sarai' see Abul Khair Muhammad Farooque, *Roads and Communications in Mughal India*, pp. 96-104.

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1. sisagar : workers in glass
2. darji : tailors
3. tamboli : betel-leaf sellers
4. rangwal : dyers
5. gval : milkmen
6. barhai : carpenters
7. sangtarash : stone-cutters
8. teli : men who work oil-presses
9. dhobi : washermen
10. dhunia : cleaners of raw cotton
11. kandoi : confectioners
12. kahar : litter bearers
13. kachhi : vegetable growers and sellers
14. kalal : wine sellers
15. kulal : potters
16. mali : flower sellers
17. kundigar : pressers of cloth
18. kagadi : paper-makers
19. kisan : farmers, peasants
20. gatbunia : weavers
21. chitera : painters
22. bindhera : artisans who bore holes in pearls and precious stones
23. bari : artisans who weave tree leaves to make containers and other like articles.
24. lakhera : lac-workers
25. thathera : manufacturers of metal utensils
26. raj : construction workers

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27. gatawa : those who weave silk or cotton threads into gold or silver ornaments
28. chapparbandh : those who lay or repair thatched roofs of houses
29. nai : barbers
30. bharbhunia : those who sell puffed rice and other cereals in a roasted form
31. sunar : goldsmiths
32. luhar : blacksmiths
33. sikligar : knife-sharpeners
34. hawaigar : manufacturers of fireworks
35. dhiwar : fishermen
36. chamar : tanners and leather workers

The word 'pauni', which Banarasi uses as a synonym for sudra, is derived from Hindi 'pavana' : 'something received as due'. Paunis, as their list reveals, consisted of specific communities performing certain services or following certain crafts : the reason they were called pauni was that they customarily received a fixed share of agricultural produce in exchange of goods supplied or services rendered over the year.

The phrase 'thirty-six paunis' had become a cliche during Banarasi's age. Poets speaking of paunis, spoke of them as 'thirty-six'. The expression occurs in the works of many poets of the period. The actual number of professional classes which could be characterized as paunis was perhaps not so fixed. Nor should we take Banarasi as reporting faithfully from actual observation. His list is drawn both from convention as well as life. Yet, a big city like Jaunpur must have contained people belonging to most of the professions Banarasi names, if not more.

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Careri, who came to India at the close of the 17th century, also provides us, like Banarasi, with a list of professional lowly classes. Only four names are common between him and Banarasi : gauli (Banarasi's gval), mali, sunar and dhobi. But Careri had direct experience only of towns like Surat, Goa, Hyderabad and others further south. His report may not be representative of the rest of India. He has, unlike Banarasi, also noted the food habits and marriage customs of such classes, or in his words, 'tribes'. Interestingly, the custom of widow-remarriage was common among many of them as it still is among lowly classes today.[1]

Babur had the paunis in mind when he praised the professional classes of skilled workers in India. These, he says, were unnumbered and of every kind; they were Hindus, each belonging to a fixed class, the trade and skill being passed from father to son. The competence of these workers was one of the few things which he found worthy of praise in India.[2]

Before ending our note on Jaunpur, we would like to append the description of the city given by Vidyapati in his *Kirtilata*. This interesting poem from which we have already quoted an account of the Jaunpur palace, is the story of how Kirtisimha of Mithila regained his lost kingdom with the help of Ibrahim Sharqi. Vidyapati's portrayal, in contrast with Banarasi's, is realistically vivid, lively and witty, though perhaps not entirely free of conventional elements or exaggeration.[3] We find in Vidyapati a rare view of the Muslims as seen through a Hindu eye :

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1 *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, pub. The National Archives of India, 1949, pp. 254-257. Careri's travel intinerary may be seen on pp. 395-396.

2 *Babur Nama* (tr. A. S. Beveridge), pp. 518-520.

3 It has similarities with the tableaus of Mario, the celebrated Bombay cartoonist and illustrator.

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"Now the two princes from Mithila arrived at the market-place, crowded with a million horses and a thousand elephants ('million' and 'thousand' are euphemisms for 'great many'). All over the place loitered slaves (banda), spies (ganda: Persian 'goinda') and litigants (vadi). Turks (meaning Muslims in general) were treating the Hindus roughly, kicking them like balls. Utensils: pans, plates (tat: Persian 'tastari'), water jars (kuza), pots (tavela) and the like were displayed for sale; there were also shops selling bows and arrows. Gold and silver merchants occupied both sides of the street, busy weighing precious stones such as diamonds, lahsunia, lasula and firoza. Slaves bustled around buying all manner of things.[1] The Turks were exchanging countless salams with each other while busily purchasing wallets (khisa), shoes (paijjall: Persian 'paizar') and socks (moja: Persian 'moza'). [Turkish officials]: mirs, walis, salars and khojas browsed along the street drinking wine and addressing each other as 'abe' 'abe' ('be' is short for the Turkish honorific 'beg').

"Devout muslims ('kalame jiyanta', the hafiz) were reciting verses from the Quran; others chanted Persian poems. Mosques were crowded with innumerable Quran-reading Turks.

"The Turk devoutly pays homage to his Khuda (God) and then gulps down a mouthful of cannabis (bhang). His face inflamed like a sheet of heated copper with inexplicable

1 Our translation of this sentence follows that of V. S. Agrawal, who interprets the line 'kharīde kharīde bahūtā gulāmo' in this sense; *Kirtilata*, 2, 1966, p. 95. But the line can also be differently understood to mean : 'innumerable slaves were being bought.' This seems closer to the poet's purport, since Vidyāpati is enumerating commodities for sale and slaves were a major commodity. Ibn Batuta speaks of the thriving slave-markets in eastern India during the days of Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq (14th century) and the easy rates at which slaves could be had : see Syed A. A. Rizvi, *Tughlaq Kalin Bharat*, Pt. I. p. 301. Rizvi's work is a collection of original Persian chronicles translated into Hindi.

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anger, he comes riding on his horse to collect the tax called 'heda' [from the shop-keepers]. As he glares peevishly from the corner of his eyes, a little stream of saliva flows down his white beard. All his money is spent on drinks, and the remainder is squandered on kababs. Who can plumb the depths of his irrational behaviour ? He is always attended by a foot-soldier who follows behind in tow. After he has consumed cannabis, the yavan (Muslim) begins to feel like a big lord (khan) and shouts incoherent orders: 'Run... catch him... hack them to pieces ... fetch me some salan to eat....' Having stuffed his mouth, he gulps down his food with water from his jar. He is always clamouring for raw onions even if the rice he is served is as white as camphor. A dancing girl entertains him, singing songs in his praise. She dances the whirling dance because the Turks care for nothing else.

"The Syed (Muslim priest) distributes sweet sirni, the remainder of his meal, among his flock. The Muslim fakir utters a blessing, seeking alms, and curses disgustedly when he receives none. The maqdum (Muslim occultist) is held in awe, as though he were the Lord of Hades. He manifests disembodied spirits on the nail of his thumb, striking terror in every heart. What comment can one make on the justice meted out by the kazi ? No man may consider his wife his own.

"The Hindus and Turks live together, each ridiculing the other's religion. The chant from the Vedas mingles with the call of the muazzim. Meat shops sell two varieties of animal flesh slaughtered differently according to Hindu and Muslim customs. There are different districts in the town for Hindu and Muslim pandits; observances of both religions are followed diligently : some perform puja, others namaz.

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"The Turk feels free to apprehend any passer-by and put him to forced labour. He will drag a brahman boy from his home and, removing the sacred tilak mark from his forehead, snap his sacred thread, making him carry cow's hide on his head, almost running him down with his horse. He snatches away ritual rice from brahman homes, using it for brewing liquor. He demolishes temples to build mosques. Everywhere one sees Muslim tombs and grave-yards. The whole world is full of them and not an inch of land remains free. The Turk will curse a man, calling him a Hindu, before throwing him out; even if he is a nonentity he acts like an angry despot. When he stirs out it seems he is about to devour the Hindus."

Vidyapati adds a little rider to his diatribe : "The power of the Sultan keeps the Turks in check. May he live long."[1]

Verses 46-65
Sulemān Karrānī

The Karrani clan of Afghans came originally from Bangash. Many held high posts under the Surs. Suleman Karrani was a brother of Taj Khan, one of the chief men in Sher Shah's court. With the death of Sher Shah's son and successor Islam Khan, Muhammad Adil Shah, his brother-in-law, ascended the throne in A.D. 1554 after murdering Islam Khan's young son. Muhammad Adil Shah's rule was devoid of the sanction of legitimate authority which had held the unruly Afghan nobility together. They now broke out in great feuds and factional fights, setting up independent principalities all over the large Sur empire. Taj Khan left the capital and occupied some territory in the Gangetic valley. Later—after he and his allies were routed at Chunar by Hemu, Adil's able general—Taj Khan moved further east to Bengal. With him was his brother Suleman. In

1 *Kirtilata*, 2, 158-213. See also the illuminating notes by V. S. Agrawal accompanying the text as foot-notes, pp. 92-119.

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Bengal Taj Khan succeeded in killing the reigning Sultan, Riyasuddin III, and established himself as king in A.D. 1564. He died a year later in A.D. 1565 and Suleman succeeded him. Suleman ruled for seven years. This short rule was a long, incessant struggle against Akbar who constantly campaigned to add Bengal to his growing empire.

Lodi Khan was a vazir of Suleman and one of his most trusted generals. The Persian chronicles do not speak of Lodi Khan as a brother-in-law of Suleman—as Banarasi would have us believe—but he was certainly related to Suleman through marriage: a daughter of Lodi Khan was married to a son of Taj Khan, Suleman's elder brother. Lodi Khan died in A.D. 1574.

Rāi Dhanā dīvān

Rai Dhana according to Banarasi was a divan of Lodi Khan. The term divan is ambiguous: it generally denoted an official post, but many different posts could be called by this name. However, from Banarasi's account of Rai Dhana's office, it is clear that, he was an important revenue collector in Lodi Khan's jagirs.

fotdār

Rai Dhana had fotdars (Banarasi distorts the word to 'potdar') serving under him who collected revenue at the pargana level. Kharagsen had joined their rank and was assigned four parganas.

In Mughal administrative terminology the officer who stood at the head of revenue matters in a pargana was called the amil. He was responsible for the actual collection of revenue and was also incharge of supervising the revenue office and treasury. The fotdar, known also as the khazanedar, functioned mainly as a treasury officer, his job being to

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look after the proper distribution of the income and to keep accounts.[1]

In Banarasi's usage, 'fotdar' has a similar but larger sense. This is apparent from verse 56 where Banarasi informs us that on being made a fotdar, Kharagsen was given two karkuns to assist him and his job was to manage 'amal' and collect revenue ('karahi amal tahsilhi dam'). Banarasi's words clearly imply that Kharagsen was assigned the functions of an amil in the Mughal sense of the term, for he was responsible both for collecting revenue and supervising 'amal' or revenue matters in general. The fact that he was assigned karkuns to assist him further strengthens this implication, for the job of a karkun, in the Mughal scheme, was to aid the amil.[2] In addition, like other fotdars serving under Rai Dhana, Kharagsen must also have been responsible for drawing up accounts, in the examination of which the Rai was so lenient and liberal (verse 51).

Banarasi portrays Rai Dhana as a devout Jain religiously observing the various practices prescribed for a pious Jain householder. His observances included prosadha, samayika, pratikramana and namokara japa. To understand the nature of these observances, we must first form an idea of their purport.

Jain observances: vratas

The Jains believe that salvation cannot be attained by any man who has not entirely renounced the world and devoted himself fully to asceticism and meditation. A householder is essentially bound to the world because of the very nature of his mundane commitments. But though he cannot give up the world fully, he can yet emulate the monk by following the practices of a monk in a partial and diluted form. A householder's observances are consequently called

1 Noman Ahmad Siddiqi, *Mughal Kalin Bhurajasva Prasasana*, pp. 100-108.
2 *Ibid., loc cit.*

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'anuvrata', 'small penances', in contrast to the 'mahavrata', 'the great penances', decreed for monks. The anuvrata is a preparation for the mahavrata. The Jains believe that a householder who observes anuvrata diligently will eventually, perhaps in a future life, qualify for monkhood and ultimate salvation.

The mahavratas consist of five total abstinences: taking of life, falsehood, accepting any object, sex and fifthly, wordly possessions. The anuvratas are analogous to these but less strict in their demand; a householder is expected to restrain himself from gross violence towards the more obvious forms of life; from gross untruths; from taking things not rightfully his; from adultery; and from multiplying his wordly possessions unnecessarily, out of pure greed.

sāmayika

Prosadha, samayika and the like are observances that aid the householder in attaining a more monk-like renunciation. Samayika is a form of meditation in which a man is urged to withdraw himself completely from his worldly pursuits and thoughts during a period of time set apart for the purpose; he is asked to shed the world temporarily, becoming for the time-being a total monk. Householders are advised to do samayika meditations as often as they can, but at least twice a day.

proṣadha

In the soul's fight against karma, ascetic practices are as important as meditation. Fasting is, therefore, highly valued. Long fasts are advised, but every householder should at least observe prosadha, abstaining from food on certain prescribed days of the lunar calendar.

pratikramaṇa

Pratikramana literally means 'to withdraw'. The purpose is to consciously turn away from one's aberrations. This is done through confession, usually to oneself—though public confession is also practised. Like samayika, which it

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resembles in purport, pratikramana has been made into a ritual, to be observed at least twice a day by a devout householder. A man is advised to calmly recapitulate and confess to himelf his errors in conduct, thought or feeling which he may have made deliberately or inadvertently. Thus he can free himself of them.

ṇamokāra

The namokara japa consists of repeating five sacred sentences: namo arhantanam, namo siddhanam, namo ayariyanam, namo uvajjhayanam and namo loe savva sahunam. They mean : obeisance to the Arhats (men who have attained salvation), obeisance to Siddhas (men who have achieved their goals), obeisance to the pure in heart, obeisance to the teachers and obeisance to all good men in the world. This is a Jain analogue to the Buddhist triadic formula : 'buddham saranam gacchami, dhammam saranam gacchami and sangham saranam gacchami.[1]

In addition to the above observances, a good Jain householder is also expected to limit his indulgences : he voluntarily fixes for himself a terminal to the gratification of his desires, a point beyond which he will not proceed. Rai Dhana's strange vow to abstain from building himself a new house falls into this class of abstinences. The Rai was a rich man. He perhaps possessed many mansions and was fond of building new ones. In vowing not to build another home he was putting a check on satisfying this fanciful desire.

Rāi Dhanā's pilgrimage

Rai Dhana's elaborate pilgrimage to a holy place with a large body of devotees is the first of many which Banarasi speaks of in his story. Organised travel in large groups to important sacred places was evidently a major element of Jain social life during Banarasi's days. He himself partici-

1 'I seek shelter with the Buddha, the true dharma (path to salvation) and the Buddhist order.'

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pated in such a pilgrimage later when he had settled in Agra.[1]

We have said that the *Kharataragaccha Brhadgurvavali* furnishes us with detailed reports of a number of large pilgrimages or 'yatrasanghas' as they were called. The earliest yatrasangha of which this *Gurvavali* speaks was organised in A.D. 1214. A sangha or congregation of pilgrims travelled to Phalaudi with much pomp and fanfare.[2] Such pilgrimages were evidently part of a well-rooted tradition reaching further back in time. The tradition continued unbroken in later centuries. Jinaprabha Suri, a learned monk of the fourteenth century, was an energetic traveller and pilgrim. He has left us an account in his *Vividha Tirtha Kalpa* of the holy places that he visited. He also speaks of yatrasanghas that frequented Phalaudi.[3]

We get a graphic though somewhat stodgy and repetitive account of the march of many a yatrasangha from the *Gurvavali*. Even allowing for pious hyperbole, they must have presented an impressive sight. A congregation which journeyed in A.D. 1318 had with it 400 horses, 500 carts and 700 bullocks. It was so large that an additional group-leader was needed to look after the rear-end of the moving flock.[4] Spectacles, alive with music, dance and drama, were staged during halts in large towns.[5] Arrival at the destination was marked with a great burst of festivity, and, in an interesting ceremony, certain ritual privileges were put on auction, the highest bidder becoming entitled to special

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 577-579.
2 *Kharataragaccha Brhadgurvavali*, p. 64.
3 *Vividha Tirtha Kalpa*, Kalpa no. 60, named the *Phalavardhiparsvanatha Kalpa*.
4 *Kharataragaccha Brhadgurvavali*, p. 66. A man called Rudpala is described as paścātyapadaprāgbhāra' : 'the man who supervised the hind part'.
5 *Ibid.*, p. 66.

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prerogatives in the propitiation ceremonies. In A.D. 1323, the two most prestigious privileges, namely the 'Indrapada' and the somewhat lower 'Mantripada' were granted to two wealthy devotees who made a donation of 2674 drachmas (drammas) and 600 drachmas respectively. Lesser privileges were distributed against smaller donations.[1]

The yatrasanghas described by Banarasi apparently lacked the lavishness of these earlier yatras, but they were still big, well-organised affairs. It was still the custom for prominent, influentially–placed Jains like Rai Dhana to seek permission (issued as an order or 'farman') from their Muslim lord for leading a yatra and to escort large congregations to distant holy places, making suitable arrangements for food and stay. The farman must have ensured some other facilities too, or, at least, a much-needed freedom from harassment.

Mount Samet

Mount Samet, Rai Dhana's destination, is today more popularly known as Pararsnath Hill. It is a high peak in the Chota Nagpur area of Bihar and lies in a heavily wooded district known as Hazaribagh. During Akbar's period, when the Rai made his journey, the region was known as Kukrah.[2]

Mount Samet rises to a height of 4481 feet, and stands immediately north of the Grand Trunk Road, at about the 200th milestone from Calcutta. It has been sacred to the Jains for centuries as the spot where the twenty-third Tirthankara, Parsvanatha, attained nirvana. A lofty temple dedicated to him stands there.

But this temple is not more than two hundred years old. Its central Parsvanatha image bears an inscription recording that it was erected by Jagat Seth Shuogal Singh

1 *Ibid., loc cit.*

2 P.C. Roychoudhury, *District Gazetteer : Hazaribagh*, Patna, 1957, p. 67.

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in A.D. 1765.[1] It replaces earlier structures of which at least two, according to the *Hazaribagh District Gazetteer*, were destroyed by lightning.[2]

Jinaprabha Suri in his *Vividha Tirtha Kalpa* (14th century A.D.) speaks of twenty celebrated Tirthankara images at Mount Samet.[3] These must have been housed in one or more shrines. We do not know if these old structures existed in Rai Dhana's days or whether the temple he visited was relatively new.

Kharagsen's flight

Banarasi tells us that at Rai Dhana's sudden death, Kharagsen immediately fled from Bengal, travelling surreptitiously in the guise of a beggar. He does not tell us what forced him to this sudden and furtive course of action. He was running in obvious panic, but what caused the panic we do not know.

But granting that he had to suddenly steal away for some unknown reason, we can perhaps make a tentative guess as to why he had to travel so stealthily and covertly.

Kharagsen's flight took place sometime in A. D. 1565–1566. Banarasi does not tell us the year, but we can arrive at it by a simple calculation. Kharagsen left Narwar in Vikram 1613. Three years later, when he was eight, he went to school. We do not know how long he studied, but the period was most likely a year, the period which Banarasi, too, spent at school. He went to Rai Dhana four years after finishing school and was with him for the greater part of a year. Thus it must have been in Vikram 1622, i. e., A. D. 1565–1566 that Kharagsen made his journey back to Jaunpur.

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1 *Ibid.*, p. 298.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 299.
3 *Vividha Tirtha Kalpa*, the *Caturasiti Tirtha Nama Sangraha Kalpa*, no. 45.

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This was a time when the whole of eastern India was in great turmoil. Ali Quli Khan, also known as Khanezaman, who was Akbar's governor in Jaunpur, had broken out in open rebellion against the emperor. He was the leader of the Uzbek faction in the court and was inflamed at the ascendancy of the Persians.

Akbar himself marched against the rebels at the head of a large army and made Jaunpur his headquarters. At the end of A. D. 1565, after successive failures, Khanezaman relented and was granted amnesty. Akbar left Jaunpur for Banaras, but no sooner had he left the town than Khanezaman mutinied again, sending forces to capture Jaunpur. Akbar quickly turned back and quelled the rebellion once again in March 1566. Ali Quli Khan was pardoned once more. But he revolted again a few months later, declaring himself an independent ruler of Jaunpur. This time the emperor finally squashed the renegades in a battle at Kara (near Manikpur), completely routing the Uzbek army and killing Khanezaman.

The entire episode dragged on for months. Jaunpur and the territories around it must have quaked with constant military activity all the while. Bengal too was involved, since Suleman Karrani was often half in league with the rebels and also looking for opportunities to further his own military designs.[1] All roads must have been bustling with constant movements of troops. A moving army in those days could often act like a marauding horde, pillaging, killing and striking terror wherever it went. Troops included rampaging mercenary raiders for whom violence was a way of life. In Vidyapati's days, in the early 15th century, such battalions were known as the army of plunderers (dhangad katak).

1 Abul Fazl, *Akbar Nama* (tr. A. S. Beveridge), Vol. 2, pp. 380–384.

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The words in which he describes them are bitter with genuine feeling:

"Wherever they pass, young princesses turn up on slave markets. These Turk soldiers put everything to fire; nothing is safe even in inaccessible places; they butcher young children and strike mortal terror in the hearts of young women. Pillage and plunder is their only livelihood. Wherever they go they bring tragedy and affliction. They are men without roots, unmoved by religion or mercy. They have neither home nor wife to go back to ... and they are as ruthlessly amoral as they are fearless; they have no sense of shame or honour, being quite insensible to good or evil."[1]

This was written more than a century before Kharagsen's secretive flight, yet there is not much reason to believe that armies had changed much. Kharagsen was young and was carrying money; we can imagine his impressionable mind being quickened to unnameable fears by stories of what happens to those who fall into the hands of merciless soldiers. And so he decided to travel as invisibly as possible. He put on the garb of a beggar, for no one pays attention to a beggar wandering about aimlessly in tattered clothes. His was not a novel measure, because the guise he adopted was a common recourse for those seeking to avoid attention. Banarasi reports that after the death of Akbar, wealthy people, apprehensive of impending anarchy and lawlessness, began to dress in rough, ragged apparel so that no one could distinguish them from the poor.[2]

Verses 66–67

After his abortive attempt to earn a fortune in Bengal, Kharagsen went west to Agra in A.D. 1569 in order to try his luck in the capital of the empire.

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1 *Kirtilata*, 4, 86–97. See also V. S. Agrawal's comments, pp. 244–248.

2 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 254–255.

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With the Mughals, Agra had become the nerve-centre of the north, a magnet which attracted the best in every important sphere of activity. It had also become the focus of trade and commerce. Many, like Kharagsen, who were seeking fortune, were inevitably drawn to it. Moreover, Jaunpur was now a town of secondary importance, soon to lose even its position as provincial capital to Allahabad—the city where Kharagsen later sought trading opportunities.

Like many of his fellow clansmen, Kharagsen became a trader in precious metals. Abul Fazl says that dealers in gold bought the metal in a relatively impure form and refined it to sell it at a profit. Sometimes a gold-merchant acted purely as an agent for the government, receiving for his work a consideration from the exchequer.[1] Perhaps Kharagsen followed both practices.

Verse 78
Sati Aut

The practice of sati, a custom which encouraged a Hindu widow to burn herself with her husband, is as old as the *Mahabharata*. Madri, a wife of Pandu, father of the Pandava heroes, committed sati on the death of her husband.

The practice of sati-worship, however, seems of a much later origin and not as old as sati itself. But it is difficult to say when it began or with what impetus. The place of its origin seems to have been Rajasthan and neighbouring areas where it is most prevalent. All classes in this region worship sati. The merchant classes, Jain or non-Jain, still flock to sati shrines, travelling, like Kharagsen, from distant areas where they have migrated for better business opportunities.

We are unable to locate any shrine dedicated to Sati Aut in or around Rohtak, but the district abounds in sati

1 *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I (tr. H. Blochmann), pp. 38–39.

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shrines, which, according to the *District Gazetteer* for Rohtak, 1883–84, are 'much larger than any other kind'. The *Gazetteer* adds that families who had emigrated from their village still came annually for worship at their old sati.[1]

Jain doctrine disfavours sati as a custom and chastises sati worshippers. But the laity persisted in it nevertheless. Banarasi's ridicule of the practice reflects the hostile attitude of the more doctrinally aware Jains.

The sati worshipped by Kharagsen's family was called Aut, a vernacular mutation of 'aputa', meaning 'one who has no children'. Banarasi uses her name in a ridiculing double-entendre when he says: 'gaye hute mangan ko put/yahu phala dino sati aut.'[2] The deriding tone plainly suggests that the other meaning of the word, namely, 'barren', was also present in his mind.

Verses 85–90
yakṣas

In Jainism, yaksas are relatively minor deities who attend upon the Tirthankaras. Buddhists similarly believe that yaksas attend upon the Buddha.

Originally, yaksas were major gods and their worship was common and widespread. Early Jain and Buddhist texts testify to the prevalence of yaksa shrines in the days of Buddha and Mahavira. The large, stone yaksa images dating back to Maurya and Sunga times confirm the currency of the yaksa cult. With the rise of more metaphysical religions such as Buddhism, Jainism, Vaisnavism and Saivism, yaksas were relegated to a secondary and lower order of importance.

In later Jain mythology and iconography, every

1 *Rohtak District Gazetteer*, pub. 1883–1884, p. 91.

2 Literally, 'they went to Sati Aut asking for a son, but this was the fruit the Sati gave them'.

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Tirthankara was assigned a specific yaksa. The yaksa attending on Parsvanatha is called Matanga by the Digambaras.

Verses 91–95
saṅghrahaṇī

Sangrahani, or dysentry, is according to Indian medical texts, a disease of the digestive system caused by the malfunctioning of the grahani, a nadi or artery containing vital energy, that is, agni or digestive fire. This agni is responsible not only for the digestion of food but also its assimilation and elimination. Sangrahani occurs when the diseased agni causes the excretion of an unhealthy mucous substance called ama, instead of assimilating the vital juices.[1]

Verses 101-105
Khairabad

Khairabad (26°32'N; 80°45'E), where Banarasi was married, is about 230 miles from Jaunpur as the crow flies. It was a fairly important town in the days of Akbar, being the capital of a sarkar in the province of Avadh.

Not much is known of the earlier history of the town. One local tradition asserts that the town was founded by a man named Khaira early in the 11th century A. D. This seems improbable since 'Khairabad' is more readily explainable as a Persian word meaning 'the city of well-being', a name which is hardly likely to be as old as the 11th century. But the site is certainly old. An early city named Manascchatra stood here and was a famous centre for pilgrimage.

A number of buildings, dating from Akbar's days, are still to be seen in Khairabad.[2]

The phrase 'ek suta tas dham' in verse 101 may lead one to suppose that Kalayanmal had an only daughter. But

1 *Susruta Samhita*, Uttara Tantra, ch. 40, verses 101–103; also *Caraka Samhita*, Cikitsitasthāna, ch 15, verse 23, with commentaries of Gaṅgādhara and Cakragaṇi.
2 *Sitapur Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1905, pp. 124-125; 162-193.

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this does not seem to be the case, for when Banarasi's first wife died, he married another daughter of Kalyanmal.[1]

Verses 105-109
Tarachand Tambi

Tarachand, the younger brother of Banarasi's father-in-law, later numbered among the prominent Jain businessmen of Agra. A *Vijnapti Patra* (a record of important events) addressed by the Svetambara Jains of the town to a contemporary monk of the Tapagaccha, Vijayasena, in A. D. 1610, names him as a worthy lay-man of the community.[2] In A. D. 1611, when Banarasi was reduced to destitution in Agra, Tarachand rendered him help and hospitality.[3]

Verses 110-131
Qilij Khan

The events described in these verses took place during A. D. 1597–1598. Allahabad had replaced Jaunpur as the capital of the suba, and Akbar had appointed his son Daniyal as governor in the new capital with Qilij as his guardian.

Qilij, whom Banarasi calls Kilich Khan, was known fully as Qilij Khan Andjani. The *Ma'asir-ul-Umra*, an encyclopaedia of Mughal biographies, informs us that he was a Turk belonging to the tribe of Jani Qurban and his ancestors had long been in the service of the Chagtai dynasty from which Babur hailed.

Akbar put great trust in Qilij, and in A. D. 1589, at the death of Raja Todarmal, he was for a long time put in charge of the financial affairs of the empire. In 1591–1592, he had been assigned Jaunpur as jagir and lived there for some time.

In 1596–1597, a daughter of Qilij was married to Akbar's third son, Daniyal. Qilij was made guardian of the

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 441-442 and 578.
2 *Vijnapti Patra*, quoted in *Ardhakathanaka*, p. 135.
3 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 344-352.

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young prince and his mansab was raised to 4500 horses. When Daniyal was appointed governor of Allahabad, he accompanied the prince as guardian.

Banarasi does not tell us why Qilij suddenly took it in his mind to persecute and torture the jewellers of Jaunpur. All he says is that he made a demand which the jewellers were unable to meet, remaining inexplicably silent about the nature of this impossible demand, or why it was made and in what circumstances. The chronicles of the period also do not record the event, and, consequently, details remain in the dark.

A similar incompleteness is found in Banarasi's account of another persecution of merchants and tradesmen that occurred during Jahangir's reign in A. D. 1617–1618.[1]

Kara-Manikpur

When the jewellers fled from Jaunpur, Kharagsen went to Kara, near Manikpur. Kara (25°27'N; 81°26'E) lies at a distance of 27 miles west from Allahabad. It was in Akbar's days the chief town of a sarkar under Allahabad. Today it is reduced to a small insignificant hamlet, but its name still attaches to the pargana Karari in Allahabad district.

Kara was often known as Kara-Manikpur, in order to distinguish it from the similar-sounding Kora (Korara for Banarasi),[2] another sarkar headquarter, now in the district of Fatehpur.

Shahzadpur

Shahzadpur (25°29'N; 81°25'E) is now in pargana Karari and stands on the high banks of the Ganga at a distance of 33 miles from Allahabad to the west. Though no more than a little hamlet today, its antiquity is obvious. The

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 462-473; see also our notes.
2 *Ibid.*, verse 502.

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Allahabad Gazetteer (1911) reports the existence of the ruins of a large stone palace to the west of the village as well as the remains of old tombs and Hindu temples all along the river front.[1] Perhaps the town followed the fate of the nearby Kara, falling into decline after Kara no longer remained a seat of local power.

Karamchand Māhur

There are certain things about the Karamchand Mahur episode which appear odd and mysterious. Banarasi, it is obvious, wanted to put Karamchand on a pedestal, and presents him to us as a man who went totally out of his way to lavish extraordinary hospitality on Kharagsen, a total stranger.

Yet, if Kharagsen was a total stranger, how did Karamchand get news of his arrival? What made him go looking for Kharagsen, calling out his name at night in the sarai? Apparently the two knew each other and Karamchand had news of Kharagsen's arrival in Shahzadpur, though Banarasi has chosen to remain silent on this point. Certainly, as Karamchand set out looking for Kharagsen, he was not acting like the character in the *Arabian Nights* who had made it a habit to go out in search of strangers every night in order to feed them a lavish meal and entertain them prodigally.

But Banarasi gives us no clue as to how well Kharagsen knew Karamchand, how close they were and what their relation was. They do not seem to have been kin, for Karamchand was not a Srimal: Banarasi calls him just a bania, a man of the merchant class. Had he been a Srimal, Banarasi would have given his gotra as he does with other Srimals. The best guess perhaps would be that he was a business acquaintance. He could not have been too close, because, in

1 pp. 295-296.

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that case, his hospitality would have been, to some measure, expected. It would not then have appeared as extraordinarily altruistic to Banarasi as it did.

Verses 132-140
Prayag:Allahabad

Allahabad, the ancient Prayag, replaced Jaunpur as the provincial capital in A.D. 1584, after a new fort had been erected there. Its importance increased, and many merchants like Kharagsen must have begun to flock to it from lesser towns.

We have said earlier that Akbar's third son Daniyal was made governor of Allahabad in A.D. 1596–1597 under the guardianship of his father–in–law Qilij Khan Andjani.[1] Daniyal, born at Ajmer in A.D. 1572, was at this time about 25 years of age. He was a self-indulgent, pleasure– loving young man, already excessively addicted to drinking, which a few years later brought him to an early death.

Qilij quickly became disgusted with his son-in-law and left Allahabad within a year. Daniyal, too, left the city by the end of A.D. 1598, recalled, says Abul Fazl, because of his improper behaviour.[2]

Fatehpur

Fatehpur (26°56' N; 80°50' E) was an important town on the old Mughal road. It is at a distance of 73 miles west from Allahabad and is still the administrative headquarter of a district.

Verses 149-165
Nūram Sultan

Banarasi here records an interesting episode that occurred during the rebellion of Jahangir, then Prince Salim, against his father, Akbar, in A.D. 1599.

Akbar was in the Deccan. Taking advantage of his

1 See notes on verses 110-131.

2 *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, p. 745 as quoted in A.L. Srivastava, *Akbar the Great*, Vol. I, p. 434.

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absence, Jahangir decided to rebel. He marched first to Agra, but Qilij Khan, the acting governor of the city, firmly refused to betray charge. Jahangir then proceeded to Allahabad and there set up court almost as an independent king. He began to confiscate imperial jagirs, distributing them among his own men.

The incident which Banarasi reports must have occurred at this stage. His story seems generally true, but not in every detail. He cannot be right, for example, in recording that Jahangir attacked Jaunpur on the pretext of marching to Kolhuban (a forest no longer on the map) for a pleasure hunt. Jahangir had by now thrown all pretext to the wind: he was in open rebellion. Akbar, moreover, so far as we know, sent no orders asking his governors to resist Jahangir. Nuram Sultan must have acted on his own, only to relent later.

It is difficult to identify Nuram Sultan, who is also addressed as Younger Qilij by Banarasi. This latter name perhaps points at Cini Qilij Khan, a son of Qilij Khan Andjani, who later became a governor of Jaunpur during Jahangir's reign. Apparently, his timely submission to Jahangir had won him the prince's favour.

But this identification has a flaw. As a governor of Jaunpur, Cini Qilij had befriended Banarasi and shown him favours. With him as patron, Banarasi's fortunes had at last taken a turn for the better.[1] Yet, surprisingly, Banarasi does not tell us in the present passage that Younger Qilij was the same as Cini Qilij who later proved a friend. This, naturally, puts serious doubt on identifying Nuram with Cini Qilij.

Looking for other likely persons, we notice that Abul

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 448-458.

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Fazl, in his list of nobles in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, names a Nuram Sultan who held a mansab of 200 horses. This Nuram was a foster brother of Mirza Ibrahim, Akbar's youngest brother who died as an infant. This man, however, appears too insignificant to be the personage indicated by Banarasi. Also, there is nothing to show that he was ever known as Younger Qilij.

It is more likely that this Younger Qilij was another son of Qilij Khan Andjani, a number of whom besides Cini Qilij had risen to high ranks. One of these, Mirza Saifulla, has been mentioned by name in the *Ma'asir-ul-Umra*.[1]

Lala Beg, Jahangir's envoy to Younger Qilij, can be identified with much greater assurance. His father, Nizam, is said to have been a torch-bearer in the Mughal royal household, subsequently becoming a librarian to Humayun. Lala Beg rose in service with Akbar and was later passed on to Jahangir while the latter was still a prince.[2] Lālā Beg

Lala Beg served Jahangir well and was duly rewarded. Jahangir records the following about him in his memoirs :

"A month had elapsed after my auspicious ascension when Lala Beg, who had, while I was prince, merited the title of Baz Bahadur, obtained the blessing of waiting on me. His mansab, which had been 1500, was raised to 4000. I promoted him to the suba of Bihar and gave him 2000 rupees. Baz Bahadur is of the lineage of the special attendants of our family; his father's name was Nizam, and he was a librarian to Humayun."[3]

Banarasi calls Lala Beg a vakil. 'Vakil' was one of those terms which could bear a number of meanings within vakīl

1 Vol. 2, pp. 538-539.
2 *Mughal Darbar* (Hindi translation of *Ma'asir-ul-Umra* by Brajratnadas), Vol. 3, p. 266.
3 *Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri* (tr. Alexander Rogers), 2nd edition, Delhi, 1968, Vol. I, p. 21.

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a vaguely defined area. Abul Fazl calls a number of high ranking ministers under Akbar, vakils.[1] 'Vakil' could also more generally mean an agent, a political representative of the man he served. This is the sense of 'vakil' that Banarasi has in mind here.

Dūlah Sāhu

Kharagsen's companion in his escape to Lacchmanpura was a merchant named Dulah Sahu. We are not told who Dulah was, but piecing together the scattered information about him in Banarasi's tale, we gather that he was the father-in-law of Banarasi's elder sister and lived in Jaunpur. In verse 327, Banarasi informs us that Uttamchand, the husband of his elder sister, was the youngest son of Dulah. From verse 278, we learn that Dulah belonged to Jaunpur, for Banarasi says that his elder sister was married in a family living in Jaunpur.

Verses 165-169

We get here an interesting list of texts which formed a contemporary curriculum of higher study, a curriculum designed for a general introduction to certain subjects.

Devadutt groomed Banarasi in three traditional Indian disciplines : the study of language, especially lexicography and rhetorics; astronomy-cum-astrology (the two were inseparable), and erotics. It appears that for those with any ambition towards education, this was the basic groundwork.

Banarasi was beginning to harbour poetic aspirations, and was soon to try his hand at writing poems too, on love and other popular themes. His study of rhetorics and the lexicons—which were in many ways analogous to the modern thesaurus—must have come in handy.

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1 *Ain-i-Akbari* (tr. H. Blochmann), Vol. I, p. 595.

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Namamala
Anekarthakosa

The two lexicons he studied were the *Namamala* and the *Anekarthakosa*. *Namamala* was a title common among lexicons, and many works of this name survive. As the name suggests, a *Namamala* consisted of a string of synonyms for a number of words in common use. The *Anekarthakosa* complements the *Namamala*. It lists words with multiple meanings.

Banarasi says that the *Namamala* he studied consisted of two hundred verses. It was probably the work of this name by Dhananjaya, a 9th century Jain scholar. His *Namamala* was very popular among Jains and has two hundred verses. Dhananjaya also wrote *Anekarthanamamala* and *Anekarthanighantu*, two lexicons of the *Anekarthakosa* genre. Banarasi may have studied these, though he gives us no clue to the text he studied in this area. He later rendered the *Namamala* into Hindi verse and his work is one of the fiirst of its kind in the language.

Khandasphuta

We are unable to identify the *Khandasphuta*. The name suggests a text devoted to astronomy and mathematics. Banarasi's later writing reveals no interest in astronomy. But he certainly had some knowledge of astrology as may be gathered from his horoscope in the *Ardhakathanaka*.[1] Perhaps he studied astronomy as an aid to astrology, which was as popular then as today.

Laghukoka

The *Laghukoka* was undoubtedly a work on erotics, a field which was attracting Banarasi's practical interest too. An author called Kokkoka of the 12th century is famous in the field of erotics for his *Ratirahasya*. *Laghukoka*, as the name suggests, was perhaps a digest of *Ratirahasya* or another large work by Kokkoka, for 'Koka' is obviously a shor-

1 Verses 83-84.

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tened form of 'Kokkoka'. It is today a by-word for erotics and, evidently, had already become so in Banarasi's days.

alaṅkāra

Banarasi does not tell us the names of texts he studied in alankara, a discipline which included poetics, rhetoric, even metrics, and was one of the commonest subjects of study in his days. A number of standard works on the subject were current in Sanskrit and these provided the main impulse for a growing literature in Hindi. Works of this class mostly followed a stereotyped pattern : they were manuals or digests containing the quintessence of accepted aesthetic ideas, themes and techniques. What often enlivened them were the original verses composed by the poet-author to serve as fresh illustrations for conventional norms. Banarasi was soon to write a work of this class in Hindi himself : this was the work in thousand verses on the theme of nava-rasa—the major human moods and sentiments, traditionally categorised as nine in number. Love generally received the lengthiest treatment as it did in Banarasi's work, too.[1]

Banarasi has not included Sanskrit grammar in his list of subjects. Yet Sanskrit was clearly his medium of study. He must have acquired the necessary grasp of the language informally, as he went along.

Verses 170-180
Banarasi's paramour

We have remarked in our introduction that Banarasi never showed any inquisitiveness towards Persian or its culture. We do, however, notice some Persian flavour in his attitude towards his paramour, a prostitute who initiated him into love. She seems to have belonged to the more sophisticated section of her profession. His dealings with her, or rather, the little that he reports of them, show a remarkably refined and cultivated 'culture of love', the courtesies and conventions of which had a marked Persian tint. The

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 178-179.

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gifts he sent her were 'peshkash' : the Persian word for a present or a token of esteem sent in advance. He called himself a 'garib' (poor wretch) and a 'slave' of his beloved, again following the Persian manner in such matters. What is more, he uses a curious metaphor, again borrowed from Persian culture, to express the depth and intensity of his love : he says that he pined for his beloved like a fervent sufi sheikh or fakir—'darad band jyaun shekh fakir.'

fakīr
darvesh

This metaphor seemed to have entered common parlance. And later, when Banarasi's elders admonished him for his profitless pursuit of knowledge and love, they said to him that love was best left to a darvesh (a sufi or fakir).[1]

To us this analogy appears puzzling. We think of the fakirs and darveshes as saints intoxicated with the love of God and not enamoured of a human paramour. It seems to us wrong or even blasphemous to associate an all too human, not to say carnal, love with a darvesh. But Banarasi's curious analogy was well-entrenched in a popular image of the darvesh. He was believed to be as capable of intense human love as divine. Such an image of the darvesh is revealed in many current stories and legends of the times. Banarasi plainly had this popular image of the fakir or darvesh in mind when he spoke of 'being in love like a fakir'.

Let us quote a contemporary story to bring the point home. It is taken from the *Tarikh-e-Daudi* of Abdullah, a historical work dedicated to Suleman Karrani of Bengal but written during the reign of Jahangir. Though the story is included in a 'historical' chronicle, it is plainly borrowed from popular lore :

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verse 199.

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"A man was once fetching his young, newly-married bride home from Zafarabad, where her parents lived, to Jaunpur. The two were travelling with a large retinue, and on the way the party halted under a tree, the bride's palanquin being placed at a slight distance from the rest for the sake of seclusion. Assured of privacy, she lifted the screen covering her carriage and, looking out, saw a darvesh sitting nearby. The darvesh also saw her and was immediately smitten with love. She found him gazing at her unwaveringly whenever she happened to look his way. Her heart too was stirred with love for him. As the party prepared to resume its journey, the bride called out to her maid and told her that she would like to stop at the same place again on her way back to her parents' home after four days.

"Four days later, the darvesh awaited the girl the whole day till sunset. He then lost hope and gave up his life with a sigh. Later, when the girl arrived there, she was told that the darvesh had died and was buried nearby. She asked her maid to take her to his grave, where she suddenly and miraculously disappeared. The grave was opened, but she was nowhere to be seen, yet lo and behold, the palms and feet of the darvesh were coloured with henna and he was wearing the gold-embroidered dress and the flowers of the girl he loved."[1]

Here is another story in the same vein from the *Tarikh-e-Shahi*, a chronicle composed in A.D. 1614.

"On the banks of a river in Panipat lived a great and profound darvesh. One day a beautiful girl came to bathe in the river. Her cheeks were like roses and her long wavy hair was like sumbul grass. The darvesh was immediately smitten with love. He asked her for a drink of water. She

1 Rizvi (tr.), *Uttar Taimur Kalin Bharat*, Vol. I, pp. 287-288.

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smiled and told him to cup his palms and began pouring water into it from the jar she was carrying. The darvesh was so intent on gazing at her that the whole jar was emptied without his drinking a drop. The girl turned from him with a smile and went away. The darvesh followed her. As she entered her house she looked back and there was the tender light of love in her eyes. The darvesh swooned and lay unconscious at her door for a long while. Finally, sighing and weeping, he went back to his cottage, near the river.

"Next day, the girl went again to bathe in the river with her friends. As soon as the darvesh saw her, he lost all sense of self, totally immersed in her beauty. The girl asked him if he would like a drink of water again, and again she poured water for him to drink. The darvesh drank as though he was drinking the waters of immortality.

"In this manner the two met day after day and their love began to cause comment. The girl's father forbade her to go to the river any more.

"A few days later there was a festival when every Hindu is required to go to the river for a ritual bath. The girl, too, accompanied her friends to the river in all her finery. The darvesh was waiting for her, and as she approached him, he put his head on her feet and instantly gave up his life. The girl also put her head on the darvesh's feet and died, with this Hindi couplet on her lips :

"At last I am one with my beloved. The wandering drop has found its ocean."[1]

Many such stories were current at the time, as may be gathered from the two chronicles quoted above, which

1 Rizvi (tr.), *Uttar Taimur Kalin Bharat*, Vol. I, p. 352.

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contain a number of others in the same vein. Stories of this kind, we may reasonably imagine, must have been at the back of Banarasi's mind when he said that he loved as intensely as a darvesh.

But we can also detect another influence. Jaunpur was noted for certain sufi saints who had written narrative poems on love in Hindi. Banarasi knew these poems, which were indeed universally admired. For months during his lean days in Agra, Banarasi's chief occupation was to recite two of these poems to a group of friends who found them so interesting as to gather around him every evening for the recital.[1] Manjhan, Jaisi, Kutuban and other poets who wrote these poems were great darveshes, and like many Persian sufis before them, they expressed their love for the divine through human tales of love. One effect of these narratives in the popular imagination must have been to transform the darvesh into a symbol of mundane human love.

Banarasi tells us tantalisingly little about the courtesan he loved. Vidayapati has a long passage in the *Kirtilata* on the courtesans of Jaunpur.[2] But poetically interesting and well-phrased though it is, it is yet too general and convention-ridden to provide a living picture of any individual courtesan and her manner of life. His description could, in truth, apply to any Indian courtesan in any city at any period, ancient or contemporary. He does tell us, though, that the courtesan quarters of the town lay near the main thoroughfare ('rajapath ka sannidhana') and that the best of courtesans lived in large, imposing mansions.[3]

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1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 335-336.

2 *Kirtilata*, 2, 126-153.

3 *Ibid.*, 2, 127-128.

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Bhānchand

Banarasi's training under Pandit Devadutt was clearly secular in nature. Under Bhanchand, his new guru, it took a definite religious turn. Bhanchand was a monk, a disciple of Abhaya Dharma Upadhyaya, a leading teacher of the Kharataragaccha sect of the Svetambara Jains.[1]

Kharataragaccha

We have had occasion to speak of this sect of Svetambaras in connection with the history of the Srimals who belonged to its fold. The Kharataragaccha was initiated as a new sect by an influential monk called Jinesvara Suri of Gujrat in the 11th century. Anahillapura, the capital of Gujrat in those days, had many rich Jain temples where numerous monks lived, leading an easy, sedentary life. This was quite contrary to the true ancient ideal which demanded that monks should live the life of itinerant mendicants. Jinesvara fought a long battle to reinstate this older, purer practice. His reform movement quickly spread to Rajasthan, Delhi and Sind. Its adherents called themselves followers of the vidhipaksa, 'the decreed doctrine'. Later, the name Kharatarapaksa, or Kharataragaccha became more popular. 'Kharatara' is a term of comparison meaning 'brighter', 'sharper', 'capable of more hardship'.[2] The word seems to have been initially used by the sect as an appellation to commend itself as closer to the true ascetic ideal. Later it became a regular name for the sect.

Pancasandhi

Banarasi had not studied Sanskrit grammar with Devadutt, but such a study was necessary if he wanted to pursue traditional knowledge in greater depth. He took lessons in the subject with Bhanchand. For his study of grammar, Banarasi seems to have used a 15th century

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, pp. 84-85.

2 Jina Vijaya Muni, *Kathakosaprakarana*, Introductory volume (Hindi), Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1949, pp. 2-5.

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grammar-made-simple called *Sarasvata Vyakarana* by Anubhutisvarupacarya. This can be inferred from his statement that he began work on a treatise entitled *Pancasandhi*. This work has not survived but the title plainly indicates its connection with the *Sarasvata Vyakarana*, which inspired other Jain authors too, to write grammatical works also called *Pancasandhi*.[1]

Srutabodha

With Bhanchand, Banarasi also studied two important texts on the science of metrics from the large body of literature on the subject in Sanskrit and Prakrit. His aim must have been to enrich his technical apparatus as a poet. Metres in Hindi verse are more directly derivative of Prakrit and Apabhramsa, rather than Sanskrit. Yet any systematic study of verse-forms also required a knowledge of basic Sanskrit texts. *Srutabodha*, the text he studied, is a celebrated and still popular work in Sanskrit on the subject. Its authorship is attributed to Kalidasa, the famous classical poet, but the work is certainly of a much later period. Its true author remains unknown. The *Chandakosa*, literally 'The Treasury of Metres', is probably the Prakrit work of that name by the Jain author Ratnasekhara Suri of the 15th century. This text also includes descriptions of Apabhramsa metres. The work itself is terse and aphoristic,[2] but explanatory commentaries must have been available to Banarasi, or, following standard pedagogic practice, the text may have been used as the foundation on which Banarasi's teacher made suitable elaborations.

Chandakosa

Eight guṇas

A distinct part of Banarasi's study with Bhanchand dealt with works on ritual observances and religious conduct

1 Upādhyāya Rājasī wrote a commentary called *Pancasandhi Balavabodha Sarasvata Vyakarana* in the 18th century. Another commentary, called *Pancasandhi Tika*, on the same work was written by Somasila Muni whose date is unknown. See *Jain Sahitya ka Brhad Itihasa*, Banaras, 1969, Vol. V, pp. 59-60.

2 *Jain Sahitya ka Brhad Itihasa*, Vol. V, p. 149.

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as ordained in the scriptures of Jainism. Banarasi even endeavoured to translate into practice what he learnt. He names especially the eight gunas (merits), referring probably to the gunas recorded in the Jain canon *Uttarajjhayanani*, which speaks of eight moral attributes desirable in a student (sisksasila). These are : absence of frivolity, self-control, dicrimination in speech ('na ya mamma mudahare') right conduct, avoidance of evil ways, lack of greed, lack of anger and truthfulness.[1]

One thing strikes us as strangely inconsistent. If he was sincerely trying to put these eight gunas into practice, then his endeavour was quite at odds with his continuing love for his prostitute paramour. He tells us that he even stooped to theft for her. Should we then doubt his honesty ? Yet it is not uncommon for men to make sincere efforts in pursuing two mutually incompatible goals at the same time. Moreover, Banarasi was extremely young at this time. A few years later he did realise the incongruity of his conduct. He threw away his manuscript of love poems into the Gomti and stopped visiting the prostitute.

nava-rasa

Meanwhile, not only was Banarasi seeking love in the arms of a courtesan, he was also busy writing a work on the nine rasas. 'Rasa' literally means 'relish', 'flavour', 'joy', but in poetics it was a technical term used for defining the aesthetic as a distinct category of experience. 'Rasa' also stood for the various human feelings and sentiments which found expression in poetry. Nine of these were traditionally listed : love, valour, pity, wonder, laughter, abhorrence, horror, fear and quietitude. Of all the sentiments, love in Banarasi's days, attracted the fancy of most poets as it did Banarasi's own.

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1 *Uttarajjhayanani*, 11th adhyayana, verses 4-5.

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Works on nava-rasa had assumed a formal conventional pattern containing both poetic theory and creative practice. The content was so arranged that a point in theory was followed by a verse or verses designed as poetic illustration. It was in these illustrations that a poet showed his mettle. Perhaps Banarasi's own work followed a similar páttern.

Verses 181-190 Banarasi's disease

Some scholars have thought that the disease which made Banarasi a sickening, foul-smelling sight was syphillis, contracted from his paramour, who was a public woman. This impression is strengthened by the fact that Kharagsen thought it a cause for shame.[1] But the symptoms, as Banarasi describes them, do not bear this out. Pathologist friends we consulted thought that the symptoms could best be diagnosed as a vicious kind of dermatitis, the exact nature of which, however, cannot be inferred from the clinically insufficient details Banarasi gives. Had the disease been syphillis, the barber's treatment would hardly have been effective.

Verse 221 The pūjā ritual

The full puja ritual is divided into several parts. First, three jars of water are poured over the idol, then sandal-paste is applied to the feet of the deity and an offering of rice grains, fresh flowers and sweet-meats is placed before it. This is followed by an arati : the devotee burns camphor or ghee in a lamp and propitiates the deity with ritual gestures. Then, after placing incense before the deity, the devotee finally makes an offering of fresh fruits. Banarasi has a poem in 10 verses in which he describes the whole procedure in detail.[2]

Verses 224-245 Hiranand's pilgrimage

It was an old custom among the Jains that when a large community pilgrimage was organised, letters were sent

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, verse 195.
2 *Banarasi Vilas*, pp. 176-177.

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to prominent persons inviting them to join the yatrasangha. The custom was already current in the early 14th century as testified by the *Kharataragaccha Brhadgurvavali*.[1]

We have a contemporary record of the pilgrimage organised by Hiranand Mukim in a work called *Sammeda-sikharacaityaparipati* by Vira Vijaya Muni. Vira Vijaya reports that the journey commenced from Agra on the thirteenth of the bright half of Magh in Vikram 1660 (A.D. 1603), when a large group set out for Prayag (Allahabad) via Shahzadpur. Hiranand sought permission for the yatra from Prince Salim (Jahangir) who was then in Prayag, and then joined the congregation at Banaras. This disagrees with Banarasi's account which says that the pilgrimage commenced on the second day of the bright half of Caitra and that the journey started from Prayag. The discrepancy can perhaps be explained by the fact that Hiranand, the most illustrious member of the travelling group, became a participant only at Prayag. His arrival must have been truly conspicuous. He brought with him a large body of troops comprising cavalry, infantry and a sizeable contingent of elephants. He also assumed responsibility for providing food for the entire travelling congregation.

Hiranand was both rich and powerful, for he stood in favour with Jahangir. A poet named Jagan has described for us the splendour of the occasion when Jahangir paid a visit to Hiranand's house in Agra. This royal visit took place in Vikram 1667, or A.D. 1610, a few years after Jahangir's ascent to the throne. Hiranand showered numerous

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1 *Kharataragaccha Brhadgurvavali*, p. 66. The Srimal Thakkur Raj Achal, who has been mentioned earlier, sent letters of invitation (kumkumpatrikā) to men of his community requesting them to accompany him on his proposed pilgrimage. In A. D. 1324, Sadhuraj Virdev sent a similar invitation for another pilgrimage: *Ibid.*, p. 77.

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dazzling gifts upon the emperor on the occasion: Jagan speaks of rainbow-coloured ornaments and brilliant jewels and precious stones unheard of even by kings.[1] This poet, who was patronised by Hiranand, certainly exaggerates, but the very fact that the emperor visited the merchant is an indication of his power and influence. Further evidence is provided by an inscription on an image dedicated to a Svetambara Jain temple in Agra, dated Vikram 1688 (A.D. 1631), where Hiranand is described as gracing the king's palace.[2]

The Pārśvanātha shrine at Banaras

While Kharagsen journeyed to Parsvanatha at Samet, Banarasi went to visit another equally famous Parsvanatha shrine, nearer home, at Banaras, the birth place of the Tirthankara. Today a shrine to the Tirthankara stands in the Bhelupura area of the town, at a spot where Parsvanatha is said to have been born. But this is a recent structure; the older structure which Banarasi visited seems to have suffered the fate of the famous Visvanatha temple in Banaras, which was destroyed by the orders of Aurangzeb in A.D. 1669.

In the 14th century, when Jinaprabha Suri visited Banaras, a temple dedicated to Parsvanatha was situated near a pond called Dantaksata, in an area named Antaravana.[3] It is difficult to say whether Banarasi had visited the same shrine. Perhaps, as has happened time and again with ancient temples in India, the spot was the same but not the shrine.

Verses 245-260 Akbar's death

Akbar ascended the throne in February, A.D. 1556, and died in October, A.D. 1605. Banarasi gives the equivalent Hindi month, Kartik, but not the date.[4] He says that Akbar

1 *Ardhakathanaka*, pp. 111-114.
2 *Ibid., loc. cit.*
3 *Vividha Tirtha Kalpa, Varanasi Nagari Kalpa* (no. 38).
4 The exact date is indeed in dispute. Dr. Beni Prasad gives October 24; Dr. A. L. Srivastava, October 15; Smith gives October 17.

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had ruled for fifty-two years. This seems to be based on a calculation in lunar years, for in terms of solar years, the duration figures out to be fifty years.

Jahangir formally ascended the throne roughly a week after his father's death. According to Banarasi, the news of his assuming power in Agra reached Jaunpur ten days after the news of Akbar's death, ending a state of uncertainty and chaos. The death of a ruling monarch could occasion general consternation and a bewildered sense of insecurity because the question of succession was often a matter of violent discord and strife among a number of contenders for power. Any son of a Mughal king could claim the throne and many did, the whole nobility becoming divided into battling factions. In Jahangir's case, however, the tension was comparatively slight and short-lived. And though there was the usual battle for the throne, Jahangir emerged victorious, the nobility almost unanimously decided to accept him as king and he was enthroned within a week of his father's death. It must have taken the normal two or three days for this news to travel to Jaunpur, hence the ten-day unrest.

Verses 265-269
The bridge on the Gomti

The bridge on which Banarasi's life took a sudden turn still stands. It is an elegant structure, one of the best of its kind. It was constructed in the early years of Akbar's rule by Munim Khan Khanekhana, who was governor of Jaunpur from A.D. 1564 to 1568. The architect was Hazrat Ali of Kabul. It is reported that Khwaja Sheikh Nizamuddin, the superintendent of works, saved enough materials from the project to build a new mansion on river Sai which lies on the road from Jaunpur to Allahabad.

Verses 271-275
The fourteen precepts

The fourteen precepts Banarasi speaks of here are rules of conduct called niyamas. They called for restraint

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and curtailment in the following : eating vegetables containing minute living beings (this category includes brinjals and leafy vegetables, often the home of insects and worms); extravagance; consuming fermented food-stuff (such as curds, for they contain bacteria); fondness for certain drinks; eating of pan (the betel leaf); use of costly apparel, flowers, vehicles, unguents; exessive travel; bathing; over-indulgence in sex, and in cereal food.[1]

aṭṭhahīyā

The eight-day religious ceremonies called the astahnika or atthahiya, which Banarasi now began to observe seriously, occur thrice a year, in the months of Kartik, Phalgun and Asadh.[2] Like other Jain ceremonies, they are marked by rigorous observances of fasts and other penances.

Verses 282-287 Banarasi's merchandise

Banarasi's business venture was a relatively small-scale affair, even allowing for the fact that his merchandise was worth more than he seems to imply. He gives us to understand in verse 284 that his father spent a total of no more than 200 rupees for all the assorted articles he was carrying to Agra: 'mudra dvai sat lagi mul', which literally means '200 rupees were spent as capital'. But these words are somewhat deceptive for they exclude stocks already owned by Kharagsen, of which Banarasi speaks in verse 282. In any case, a little reflection on contemporary price-structure will show that Banarasi was travelling with goods worth more than 200 rupees.

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1 These niyamas are subsumed under the bhogopabhogaparimāṇa vrata, for which see notes on verse 588. There is a celebrated Prakrit verse which lists the objects of these fourteen niyamas :

'pāṇaha tambola vatthakusumesu
vāhaṇa sayaṇavilevaṇabambhadisiṇhāṇabhattesu'

Banarasi has made a Hindi paraphrase of this verse in a poem called *Vaidya Adi ke Bheda, Banarasi Vilas*, p. 206, verse 29.

2 Madhu Sen, *A Cultural Study of the Nisitha Curni*, Varanasi, 1975, pp. 325-326.

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Abul Fazl has recorded for us the prices of many articles in Akbar's days. They fluctuated both in time and place, yet they seem to have remained substantially constant till Jahangir's days, when Banarasi travelled to Agra with his merchandise. Banarasi tells us that he had bought 20 maunds of ghee. This must have cost him over 50 rupees, because ghee cost 105 dams, or 2 rupees 25 dams a maund[1] (a rupee was roughly equivalent to 40 dams). The price of precious stones varied enormously with quality, even as today. Abul Fazl says that rubies could cost anywhere between a quarter of a rupee to 10,000 rupees for the same quantity.[2] Cloth, even cotton cloth, likewise came in a great range of quality and hence price.[3] We cannot thus make a fair guess of the exact amount Banarasi spent on these articles. But if ghee alone cost him 50 rupees, and if this was just a minor part of his merchandise as is evident from his account of the sale of his goods,[4] then the total cost must have exceeded 200 rupees.

It might be interesting to estimate how much 200 rupees in Banarasi's days would mean in modern currency. But an accurate conversion table is difficult to arrive at because the available data is insufficient for the purpose. What we need is a reliable price–index for the period, but all we have are a few figures noted by Abul Fazl. And since the relative importance of different things in the economy as a whole has undergone major changes since Banarasi's times, we reach different results by taking different articles as the basis for calculation. Rupees 200 would have fetched 320 maunds of milk at Abul Fazl's prices, a quantity which would

1 *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. I, p. 67.

2 *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 101.

4 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 314-323. Banarasi talks at length of the losses he incurs in jewels and ornaments; ghee is clearly assigned a secondary place.

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today (in 1979) cost approximately between 25,000 to 30,000 rupees (at retail prices, which are perhaps what Abul Fazl's figures also represent). The same sum would have fetched 70 maunds of ordinary quality wheat, which today will cost between 35,000 to 40,000 rupees. With ghee as the base we get a very different figure: 200 rupees would have fetched 75 maunds of ghee in Akbar's days; today it would cost 65,000 to 75,000 rupees. The price ratio between milk and ghee was evidently less in those days than today. Gold was Rs. 8 a tola; today it costs 150 times more; but silver which sold at Re. 1 a tola has gone up by only 15 to 18 times. Skilled labour is only paid 100 times more today than in Akbar's days. But wheat costs about 200 times more.[1]

The above figures show that we cannot arrive at a sure conversion rate. Yet to make a very tentative rough estimate we may perhaps conjecture that Banarasi's 200 rupees would today mean somewhere between 30,000 and 40,000 rupees.

Verses 289-300
Etawa

Etawa lies on the Yamuna at 26°47'N, 79°1'E, 70 miles southeast of Agra on the old Mughal road. In Akbar's days the town was a dastur, a sub division, in the sarkar of Agra. Several bankers of note had settled here in the 17th century, making the town an important centre for trade and commerce. A fort, which De Laet, visiting India in A.D. 1631 had seen, commands the town.

Finding no room in a sarai, Banarasi looked for a shop where he could sleep. This seems to have been common practice. Nicolao Manuci, travelling later in the same century, records that while travelling through the state of Bijapur, he had to stop for a night in Pandarapur, a town 112 miles southeast of Poona. There he says: "I took up

1 *Ain-i-Akbari*, pp. 38-39; 66-67; 235-236. Our figures are only rough approximates.

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my quarters in the public bazar, as is the custom of travellers, and deposited myself in an open shop."[1]

Banarasi was given room on the condition that he would have to face the 'city authorities' in the morning. The word in the original for 'city authorities' is 'sariyati', a Hindi mutation of Persian 'shariyat'. 'Shariyat' denoted Islamic law, which was the official law of the country. In Banarasi's usage the word stands not for law but agents of law, and has a parallel in common English parlance where 'law' can also mean 'police force'. Elsewhere, in verse 524, Banarasi uses 'sariyati' as meaning 'authority' or 'power' when he says that the kotwal (a police officer) had 'sariyati' over three villages.

Verses 309-313

Bandīdās

Banarasi's younger sister was married in 1607 A.D. In verse 279 Banarasi says that her in-laws lived in Patna. By A.D. 1610 however, Bandidas, her husband, was already a merchant of repute among the Svetambara Jains of Agra. The *Vijnapti Patra* mentioned earlier,[2] names him as one of the 88 honoured Jain traders living in the city, referring to him as Sah Bandidas.

Motī Katlā

Bandidas lived in Moti Katla. 'Katla' or 'katra' (from 'katahara', 'a square enclosure') originally meant a market place with shops arranged around an open square plaza. But it could also mean any marketing area. There is still a Moti Katra in Agra where many old Jain temples, both of the Svetambara and Digambara sects, stand.

Verse 316

Part of this verse in obscure. Banarasi says that he received a hundi, obviously the one against which money was borrowed earlier, and meted out the sum due. Then he adds 'bat uhan ki jane ram' : literally, 'God only knows what

1 *Storia Do Mogor*, Vol. II, p. 170.
2 See notes on verses 105-109.

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passed there'. We do not know what he had in mind in saying this. Perhaps he means that he made no attempts to learn what transpired in Jaunpur afterwards. Or he may be intending to convey that having cleared all debts, he felt he had now washed his hands off the entire matter. Whatever he may mean, the expression he uses certainly carries an undertone of frustration and disgust with the whole venture.

Verse 322
Karorī

Banarasi uses the term 'karori' for the tax collector who relieved him of the little money he had left. 'Karori' (from 'karora' or 'ten million', whence the derivative meaning of 'one who keeps account', 'a treasury officer') was an old Hindi word adopted by the Mughal administration to denote an officer whose duty it was to collect taxes from markets devoted to important commodities such as grain, salt and cloth.[1] Banarasi, presumably, owed dues for his transactions in cloth.

Verses 335-336
Mirgavati
Madhumalati

Mirgavati was composed in A.D. 1503 by Kutuban. *Madhumalati* was written by Manjhan about five decades later. These Hindi narrative poems belong to a genre already old and well-established by Banarasi's days. They were adaptations by Muslim sufi poets of popular love-stories or ballads for the purpose of expressing the soul's mystic yearning for God in allegorical terms. Yet, though allegorical in intent, these poems retained the poignance of a purely human passion, which accounted for their great popular appeal.

Mirgavati was written in Jaunpur. It opens with a panegyric to Husain Shah, the last Sharqi ruler of Jaunpur. The plot is simple, not unlike a fairy tale. A prince falls in love with an apsara, a celestial maiden, who comes down from her heavenly abode on certain days in order to bathe in

1 Jadunath Sarkar, *Mughal Administration* (4th ed.), Calcutta, 1952, p. 214.

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a lonely pond. The prince makes her his captive through a a ruse. She, too, tricks him and escapes. He wanders in search of her and finally wins her after a long and arduous journey, allegorical of the divine, during which, however, he also becomes entangled with a number of other fair princesses.

Manjhan, the author of *Madhumalati*, belonged to the Shattari order of sufis. His story, like Kutuban's, is also a dressed-up fantasy. But the allegorical element in it is more pronounced than in the earlier poem. Thus, the city where the beloved lives is called 'Maharasanagara', 'the City of Ecstasy'; the prince, in search of her, passes through another city named 'Cittabisraunnagara', the 'City of Forgetfulness'. Devices such as these clearly serve to make the allegorical intent more explicit.

Following an old tradition, Banarasi sang or chanted these poems. He must have used tunes employed for popular ballads, similar to those which are still current for Tulsi's *Ramayana*, an epic composed in the third quarter of the 16th century and quite close in its language and metric structure to the *Mirgavati* and *Madhumalati*. The *Candayana*, written in A.D. 1379 by Maulana Daud, and the earliest extant love-ballad in the sufi tradition, has an episode where a wandering mendicant appears on the streets singing a popular love-ballad called *Candravali*, captivating his listeners with his song[1]. It is clear from the context that this *Candravali* was an earlier poem in the old Indian tradition of love-narratives. *Candayana*, too, was similarly sung, and Badayuni, writing in Akbar's time, records that this sweet song composed by Maulana Daud had the power to entrance learned sufis and common folk alike.[2]

1 *Candayana*, 6, 60-61; pp. 58-59 of Dr. Mata Prasad Gupta's edition of the text, Agra, 1967.

2 Badayuni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh* (tr.), Vol. I, p. 333 of the Bibliotheca Indica edition.

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Verses 352-358
Dharamdās

Dharamdas, Banarasi's wayward partner, became his associate again in his maturer years when Banarasi had made Agra his home after his father's death. Dharamdas was now a changed man deeply committed to religion and the spiritual life.[1]

Nathuram Premi quotes a poem by Dharamdas entitled *Gurusisyakathani*, which is in the form of a discourse by a guru to his disciple, teaching the hollowness of all worldly things and the superior merits of the spiritual life. The metre and rhyme are interestingly unusual. The language is signally colloquial in idiom with a noticeable influence of Rajasthani (many trading families from Rajasthan had settled in Agra).

Banarasi has a poem with the same metre and rhyme scheme called *Moksa Paidi*. The language, again, is colloquial, though it leans towards Punjabi rather than Rajasthani. It was composed sometime between A.D. 1623 and 1635, the period when Banarasi had finally settled in Agra. The marked resemblance between the two poems does not seem accidental : the two friends had evidently decided to try their skill in a new, exciting metre together.

No other work by Dharamdas is available.

Verse 382

Banarasi's wife hints at unrest or trouble in Jaunpur at this time. It was Vikram 1670 (A.D. 1613) as we gather from verse 363. We are unable to trace reports of any political upheaval in that region during this period. She must have been referring to trouble or unrest in the family rather than the town.

Verses 386-387
Banarasi's
Namamala

The *Namamala* is a short lexicon in Hindi comprising 175 doha verses. The work has come down to us complete

1 See our introduction, pp. xxx-xxxi.

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and so Banarasi's statement that he wrote the work in 200 verses is not to be taken literally.

The work is based on Dhananjaya's *Namamala*, which Banarasi had studied with Pandit Devadutt.[1] It is not just a slavish reproduction of the original, since Banarasi's table of synonyms contains simple colloquial Hindi words besides pedantic Sanskrit ones.

Banarasi's *Namamala* is one of the earliest works of its kind in Hindi. Only two works antedate it : the *Manamanjari* and the *Anekarthanamamala*. Both are by Nandadas and were written a few decades earlier. Banarasi's *Namamala* was completed on the tenth of the bright half of Asvin, Vikram 1670 (A.D. 1613).[2]

Ajitanatha Ke Chand

Ajitanatha Ke Chand is a small hymn in five stanzas addressed to Tirthankara Ajitanatha. The poem begins with a homage to Ravichand. The reference is obviously to Bhanchand, Banarasi's monk-guru of his Jaunpur days.[3] At the end of the work, Banarasi tells us that he had completed it on the 12th of the bright half of Asvin, Vikram 1670, that is, two days after the *Namamala*.

This short and rather commonplace hymn now forms part of *Banarasi Vilas*,[4] the posthumous collection of Banarasi's works made shortly after his death.

Verses 394-398
Narottam and
Thān

Though this is the first time that Banarasi speaks of Narottam and Than, implying that they were new friends,

1 See notes on verses 165-169.

2 *Namamala*, verse 171, quoted by Ravindra Kumar Jain in his *Kavivar Banarasidas*, pp. 124 and 131.

3 Banarasi uses 'ravi', a synonym of 'bhān' or 'bhānu' to meet a contingency of the metre. This was common practice.

4 Bhanvarlal Jain and Kasturchand Kasliwal (ed.), *Banarasi Vilas*, Jaipur, 1954, pp. 187-189.

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yet he had certainly known them for some time. In his *Namamala*, which, as we learn from his story, was written before his present sojourn in Agra, he says that he wrote the lexicon at the behest of Narottam and Than.[1] Banarasi had apparently befriended the two during his earlier stay in Agra.

Banarasi has again mentioned Than (his full name was Than Mal Badaliya) and Narottam together in a song set to raga Barva. The song, he declares, was inspired by these two.[2]

Than was later one of Banarasi's three blasphemous friends with whom he indulged in sacrilegious drollery, scoffing religion and the mystic life.[3]

Banarasi calls Narottam the best friend he ever had.[4] He felt so close to Narottam that in a hymn to Tirthankara Santinatha he addresses the Tirthankara as 'Lord of Narottam' instead of the usual 'Lord of Banarasi.'[5]

Verses 399-402
Tārāchand
Moṭhīyā

Banarasi's reason for spending his last bit of money in order to keep a seemingly unimportant request from Tarachand was evidently not pure, disinterested friendship, though Banarasi makes it appear so. Tarachand soon offered him much-needed work.

Tarachand needs, for the modern reader, an introduction which Banarasi does not properly provide, taking it for granted that his audience was quite familiar with this wealthy merchant. The few facts about Tarachand that Banarasi

1 *Namamala*, verse 170.
2 *Banarasi Vilas*, pp. 228-230.
3 *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 60-1605.
4 *Ibid.*, verse 487.
5 *Banarasi Vilas*, p. 189.

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gives us, emerge piecemeal and quite incidentally from his narrative, without sequence or coherence. We are here putting this scattered information together for the convenience of the reader because it will be useful for understanding certain events that follow.

Tarachand Mothiya was a son of Nema Sahu, one of the wealthiest Srimals then living in Agra. Tarachand's brother, known as Sabal Singh (whom we shall meet later, again without proper introduction) lived like a prince and controlled the family business.

Verses 406-410

From facts reported further in the story, we learn that Banarasi and Narottam were not just agents or employees of Tarachand and his firm as the present passage might suggest, but had also entered into some kind of partnership with him. In verse 520 Banarasi calls himself a partner of Nema Sahu, Tarachand's father; and in a still later passage Banarasi speaks of the annulment of their partnership (verses 567-568). It is likely, though, that there was no partnership to begin with but it evolved later when Banarasi had made enough money of his own to buy a share in the venture.

Patna

Patna, where Banarasi now went to seek his fortune, lies on the site of ancient Pataliputra, a city built in the days of Mahavira and Buddha as the seat of the powerful Magadha empire. At the time when Muslims attacked India, Patna had dwindled into a small, insignificant town. Sher Shah restored some importance to it by building a fort in A.D. 1541. The city thence began to grow into a great centre of commerce. Ralph Fitch, who visited it in A.D. 1586, describes it is as big centre of trade in 'cotton and cloth of cotton and much sugar, which they carry hence to Bengal and India, very much opium and other commodities'. Under

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the Mughals it was the capital of the suba of Bihar, and a centre of power as well as trade.

Firozabad

Firozabad (27°9'N, 78°23'E), where Banarasi and his friends hired a carriage, lies at a distance of 26 miles from Agra. The present town is said to date back to the days of Akbar, who, according to a local legend, was so angered by the inhabitants of the place that he had the old town destroyed and ordered his eunuch, Firoz Khwaja, to build a new one, and named it after its builder.

Verses 426-428
Fatehpur

Banarasi had spoken earlier of a Fatehpur in verses 136-146, and we had identified it with the well-known town 73 miles west of Allahabad, presently the headquarters of a district in Uttar Pradesh. This cannot be the town of which Banarasi speaks here, for he describes it as lying at a distance of only 12 miles from Allahabad.

The *Allahabad Gazetteer*[1] mentions a Fatehpur, now a small village, 10 miles to the southeast of Kara. Known as Makarwal or Sakarwal, it seems to have been a town of some importance in earlier days and is perhaps the place Banarasi is speaking of.

Verse 439
pān

Varadaraja (circa A. D. 1600–1660), a pupil of the celebrated Bhattoji Diksita, deplores the custom of eating pan by the roadside prevailing all over India.[2] Perhaps pan shops, a regular feature of the roadside in the cities today, were a novel thing in Banarasi's days: Varadaraja would not have censured an old, established practice sanctioned by tradition. We do not know if the habit of taking tobacco

1 p. 165.

2 'sarveṣāṁ deśe pathi tāmbūlabhakṣaṇaṁ durācāraḥ,' quoted by P. K. Gode in his paper entitled 'Some Provincial Social Customs and Manners mentioned by Varadarāja' in *Studies in Indian Cultural History*, Part II, p. 74.

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with pan, so common in North India today, had also come into vogue by then.

Verse 443
mansab

The word 'mansab' is derived from the Arabian 'mansib', meaning 'a post', 'an office'. Persons holding mansabs were called mansabdars and were conceived as commanders of a stipulated number of troops (literally horsemen) in the Mughal political set-up which was basically conceived as a military hierarchy. At the bottom of the hierarchy were dehbashi mansabdars or commanders of ten (that is, ten horses). At the highest rungs, immediately below the emperor, were the dehazari mansabdars, or commanders of ten thousand horses. Mansabs over five thousand were usually reserved for the sons of the emperor. Thus, the fact that Qilij Khan held a mansab of four thousand indicates that he was a very high-ranking noble. Mansabdars received jagirs, yielding an appropriate revenue, as pay. A big mansabdar could be made a governor in his own jagir but this practice was by no means the rule.

Cini Qilij Khan

Qilij Khan, or more fully Cini Qilij Khan, was a son of Qilij Khan Andjani, the man who, as governor of Jaunpur, had earlier persecuted and tortured the jewellers of that town.[1] Contemporary records laud him as an educated and liberal man, well–versed in matters of government. Jahangir in his memoirs tells us that Cini Qilij received Jaunpur as a jagir after the death of his father. His brother Mirza Lahori accompained him to his jagir. Lahori's wicked and cruel behaviour later enraged Jahangir and he sent orders for Qilij to return to Agra. Fearing recrimination and punishment, Qilij fled but was caught and died of self-inflicted wounds.[1] Banarasi speaks of Qilij's death but

1 See notes on verses 110-131.

2 A. Rogers (tr.), *Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri*, pp. 301-302.

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not the disgraceful circumstances in which it occurred, perhaps out of respect for his memory.

The *Ma'asir-ul-Umra* records that Cini Qilij was fond of Hindi verse, and was himself an able practitioner of the art.[1] This explains his interest in the *Namamala, Chandakosa and Srutabodha*, works helpful to a poet for mastering the technique of his art.

Verses 462-473
Āghā Noor's persecution

No report of the persecution of which Banarasi speaks here is to be found in the Persian chronicles. Nor do they mention any noble in the court of Jahangir named Agha Noor.

A clue to the event can, however, be discovered in Jahangir's memoirs. We can place the event in A.D. 1617 for it occurred two and a half years after Cini Qilij's death in Vikram 1672, that is, A.D. 1615. Jahangir had, in that year, suddenly become inflamed against sevaras or Svetambara Jain monks ('sevara' is derived from 'svetapata', a synonym of 'svetambara'). The immediate reason was his displeasure with a monk whom he calls Man Singh, describing him as head of the 'kartal'—i.e., the Kharatara-gaccha—sect of Jains.[2] Earlier in his career, Man Singh had been a member of the chosen group of religious men with whom Akbar held constant theological discussions. At Akbar's death, when strife broke out between Jahangir and His brother Khusro, Rai Singh, the raja of Bikaner, asked Man Singh to predict astrologically who would be the next emperor. Man Singh, according to Jahangir's report, told the raja that Jahangir's chances of success were very dim and

1 *Ma'asir-ul-Umra* (tr. H. Beveridge), Vol. I, Bibliotheca Indica ed., Calcutta, 1940, pp. 434-435.

2 A. Rogers (tr.), *Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri*, Vol. I, pp. 437-438.

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that even if he were to win, he would not rule for more than two years. Events belied this prognostication. The raja was put to shame and did not live much longer.

Jahangir seems to have said nothing at the time of his ascension to Man Singh (known in the Kharataragaccha records as Jina Simha). But for some strange, unexplained reasons, twelve years after having become king, he sent for him in anger. Man Singh, according to Jahangir's account, set out in compliance with the order but died on the road, taking poison out of fright.[1] Jahangir at once became furious with all Jains, monks as well as laymen. And since he believed that all business people were Jains, he sent farmans all over his empire ordering every single tradesman and Jain monk to be thrown out of his territories.[2] Such whimsical, irrational behaviour was quite in line with the emperor's character.

There are no contemporary reports to tell us if this order was actually executed. Banarasi's story remains the sole testimony to the fact that, in some places at least, Jahangir's orders were put to effect. Wiser counsel seemed to have prevailed soon, and as on many similar occasions, the inhuman farman was withdrawn by the emperor. Agha Noor released his prisoners. We do not know why he took a few of the richer merchants as captives with him. Perhaps it was to extract bribes.

Raunahi

Raunahi, where Banarasi remained a week in hiding, was known in ancient times as Ratnavahapura. Today it is a small town on the high banks of the river Ghaggar or Saryu, eleven miles from Faizabad and two miles north of

1 Jain records give a different version of the story, which, however, does not concern us here.

2 *Tuzuk-e-Jahangiri*, *loc. cit.*

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the Sohwal railway station. Nathuram Premi, writing in 1957, records that the town had five Jain temples, two belonging to the Svetambaras and three to the Digambaras.[1] The *Fyzabad Gazetteer*,[2] published in 1905, speaks of just one shrine devoted to Parsvanatha, built in A. D. 1800 by the Jains of Lucknow and Calcutta. The Dharmanatha temple in which Banarasi lived in hiding as a devotee was, apparently, destroyed long before this time.

According to Jain legends, Ratnavahapura is the place where the major events in the life of Tirthankara Dharmanatha took place. Here he was born, ordained as a monk, attained enlightenment and finally nirvana. When Jinaprabha Suri visited the town in the 14th century, he found a shrine to Dharmanatha with a celebrated image of the Tirthankara worshipped even by non-Jains as Dharmaraja.[3]

Ayodhyā

Ayodhya, on the way to Raunahi, is a very ancient town, famous in the epic *Ramayana* as the seat of Rama's legendary kingdom. The city stands at 26°48' N and 32°31'E on the right banks of the Saryu, otherwise known as Ghaggar. It is four miles northeast of Faizabad, the present district headquarters. The *Fyzabad Gazetteer* of 1905 records the existence of six Jain temples in Ayodhya, none of any antiquity: five of them were built in A.D. 1784.[4]

Ayodhya is the birthplace of five Jain Tirthankaras: Rishabhadeva, Ajitanatha, Sumitanatha and Anantanatha. When Jinaprabha visited the town in the 14th century, there

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1 *Ardhakathanaka*, p. 82.

2 p. 26.

3 *Vividha Tirtha Kalpa, Ratnavahapura Kalpa*, no. 20.

4 pp. 57-58.

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were a number of magnificent shrines in and around the town.[1]

Surhurpur

Another town which Banarasi and Narottam approached in their forced wanderings was Surhurpur. Nathuram Premi thought that Surhurpur was but another name for Jaunpur.[2] This is quite impossible: the two friends had turned away from Jaunpur in order to proceed to Surhurpur.

Surhurpur is, in fact, a large village lying at 26°51' N and 80°40'E on the road from Jaunpur to Faizabad. It stands on the banks of the Majhori river on which a fine masonry bridge, said to date from Akbar's days, still survives.[3]

It would not be possible today to identify the small jungle fort near Surhurpur where Banarasi and Narottam remained in hiding for forty days.

Verses 474-475
Sabal Singh
Mothiya

Sabal Singh's name crops up rather abruptly in Banarasi's tale. There is no earlier mention of this man whom Banarasi now calls his business partner, and at whose bidding he is willing to drop everything in Jaunpur and start immediately for Agra. He obviously expects his audience to be quite familiar with Sabal Singh.

The man was, we have noted earlier, a brother of Tarachand, who had sent Banarasi and Narottam as his business agents to Patna.[4] He was, as will become more obvious later, the real authority behind Tarachand's family business.

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1 *Vividha Tirtha Kalpa, Ayodhyanagari Kalpa*, no. 13.
2 *Ardhakathanaka*, p. 83.
3 *Fyzabad Gazetteer*, p. 265.
4 See notes on verses 399-402.

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Verse 486

Our translation of Banarasi's poetic eulogy of Narottam is rather free. The first line, which we have translated as: 'naturally devout, he ever meditates on the good path' reads in the original: 'navapada dhyan dharata bhagavantaji ko', literally : 'he meditates on the navapada and on God'.

nava-pada

Navapada—literally, 'the nine words'—stands for the nine fundamental pillars or concepts of Jainism. Five of these are named in the namokara mantra,[1] namely, the arhat, the siddha, the upadhyaya, the acharya and the sadhu. The other four are samyakdarsana ((right vision or outlook), samyak-jnana (right knowledge), samyakcaritra (right conduct) and dharma (the true religion).

Verse 498
Ghaisūā

Ghaisua is the older name of modern Machlishahar, which lies at a distance of 18 miles from Jaunpur on the road to Allahabad. The older name Ghaisua is still preserved as the name of the pargana in which the town stands.

Verses 502-545
Korarā (Korā)

Banarasi brackets Korara, otherwise known as Kora, with Ghatampur to distinguish it from the similar-sounding Kara which he describes as near Manikpur. Korara is an ancient town at 26°7'N and 80°22'E on the old Mughal road, 29 miles west of Fatehpur, the present district headquarters. Abul Fazl names it as the urban headquarters of a sarkar in the suba (province) of Allahabad.

The ahīr woman

The woman Banarasi's two brahman companions went to visit in this town was plainly a woman of loose morals. Banarasi does not say so expressly, but implies it in calling her an ahir, which for him was obviously comment enough on her sexual morals. Interestingly, *Smrti Candrika*, a commentary on the *Narada Smrti* (an important source of

1 See notes on verses 46-65.

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Hindu law), records a convention that adultery with an abhira (ahir) woman was not punishable by law because according to the custom of these people, this was not a serious offence.[1]

kotwāl

The kotwal—from the earlier 'kottapala', 'keeper of a fort'—to whom the fraudulent silver-merchant repaired, was the chief of the town police. The nature of his duties may be inferred from a surviving sanad (authoritative letter of appointment) which urges a prospective kotwal to ensure that no theft occurs in his town or ward so that people may enjoy security and ply their trade in peace.[2]

The kotwal functioned under a qazi, a judiciary officer versed in Islamic law. He was also under another officer, the faujdar, who was responsible for the general administration of an entire sarkar.

hākim

In Banarasi's story, the kotwal on receiving complaint turned to the hakim. 'Hakim' is an ambiguous term; there was no specific post bearing this name, and any important official could be called a hakim. In Banarasi's use, 'hakim' could be a reference either to the qazi or the faujdar, both of whom were the kotwal's superior.

The dīvān

The hakim, Banarasi further tells us, sent his divan with the kotwal. The word 'divan' is again ambiguous. It denoted very high-ranking officials such as the chancellor of the exchequer, or the chief of revenue collection. But it could also mean an assistant to any officer. It is obviously the latter sense which is applicable in this context. Every qazi had

1 'ābhīrastrīpuruṣavyabhicāre na daṇḍa ityādiko'sti ghoṣe samayaḥ', *Smrti Candrika*, II, p. 223, on *Narada Smrti*, XIII, 2; quoted by Kane, *History of Dharmasastra*, Vol. III, p. 487; see also pp. 261 and 488.

2 Jadunath Sarkar, *Mughal Administration*, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

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under him a mufti who knew the law and assisted him in his work. This mufti could possibly be Banarasi's divan. But if by hakim Banarasi means not the qazi but the faujdar—which seems more likely because, unlike the qazi, the faujdar had distinct police duties—then the divan would perhaps indicate the amin, a revenue collecting officer who also had charge of peace and order.

sūlī

From Sanskrit 'sula', or 'thorn'. The suli was a long iron spike on which confirmed criminals such as robbers were condemned to slow death by torture. The suli was placed on the ground vertically with its sharp end pointing upwards. The condemned man was made to sit on it and then hit on the head with a heavy mace.

On the face of it, the suli incident suggests that the kotwal planned to put Banarasi and his friends to death by torture. A little reflection, however, reveals that his action could not have been more than a threat. The *Fatwa-e-Alamgiri*, a digest of Islamic law prepared under the severest and the most orthodox Mughal king, Aurangzeb, does not recommend a punishment exceeding chastisement (tazir) and reprimand (tahdid) for a counterfeit coiner guilty of a first offence. Even imprisonment of an offender was not advised unless the practice became his profession.[1]

Barī

Bari, where Banarasi's Maheshwari friend could luckily discover relations through marriage, was presumably a place of some importance. *The Cawnpore Gazetteer* speaks of a Bari distributary in tehsil Ghatampur which has obviously been named after a village of that name, but a village no longer significant enough to deserve a separate niche in that record.[2]

1 *Ibid.*, p. 112.
2 p. 296.

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Verse 555
The Mathura brahmans

Banarasi's brahman companions lived in Mathura, which has long had a significantly large brahman population. In 1901 they formed a high 17% of the Hindu population.[1] Most brahmans were attached to the numerous temples in the town, serving as priests or pandas, who made a living tending to the enormous flow of pilgrims. Yet there were also brahman landowners and cultivators in the district. Many of these were, in addition, engaged in the carrying trade, having practically a monopoly in the trade of salt from Rajputana. This necessitated long journeys away from home on the part of the men; the tilling of land was, consequently, left to the women.[2] Banarasi's friends may have belonged to this class : we find them travelling with merchants. The *Mathura Gazetteer*, which was recorded early in this century, speaks only of brahmans trading with Rajputana. It is likely that in earlier times they had a similar trade also with the east.

Verses 572-575
The plague

The symptoms described here indicate that the plague was bubonic, which is characterised by the formation of bubos : inflammatory swellings of the lymph glands, especially in the groin. The Hindi word 'ganth' (knot) refers to this bubonic formation. Jahangir has also described this particular plague which occurred in A. D. 1618 (Vikram 1675) when the emperor was in Ahmedabad (Gujrat). He was advised not to travel to Agra because in that city 'no less than hundred persons were dying every day from swellings that appeared on the thigh, the armpits or below the jaws'. Rats, Jahangir adds, lost their eyesight when in the grip of the disease and wandered around in a state of utter blindness before falling down in a fatal fit. Banarasi has also passingly mentioned the rats. And though he does not speak of their

1 *Mathura District Gazetteer*, Allahabad, 1911, p. 107.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 108.

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peculiar behaviour here, it left a deep impression on him. In his *Samayasaranataka* he compares the mad worldly pursuits of men to the demented death dance of a rat struck by the plague.[1]

Azīzpur

Azizpur, the brahman village to which Banarasi escaped in order to avoid the plague, and where he was guilty of an unmentionable sin, is probably the village of that name in the Mathura district, a region where brahmans preponderate.[2]

Verses 579-585 Vardhamān Kaṅwar

Vardhaman Kaṅwar, the leader of the pilgrim-group with which Banarasi and his family travelled, is listed among the prominent Svetambara Jain merchants of Agra in the earlier mentioned *Vijnapti Patra.*

This yatrasangha confined its journey to towns in West U. P., not too distant from Agra.

Meerut

Meerut, situated at 29°1'N and 77°43'E, is an ancient town and was the head of a dastur (sub-division) under Delhi in the days of Akbar.

Aligarh

Banarasi refers to Aligarh as Koil. The older name Koil still attaches to the tehsil (the district sub-division). The *Aligarh Gazetteer*, published in 1909, records that the name Koil for the city was still in popular use at the beginning of the present century.[3] Aligarh was the name of the fortress commanding the town, standing at a little distance to the north. The earlier fort, which Hazrat Nizami had characterized as one of the most celebrated forts of India, was known as Koil. It was held by Rajputs before Qutubu-

1 *Samayasaranataka*, verse 43.
2 *Mathura District Gazetteer, op. cit.*, see under 'Azizpur'.
3 p. 197.

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ddin Aibak wrested it from Chandrasena at the end of the 12th century.[1]

Hastināpur

The ancient Hastinapur of *Mahabharata* fame is now no more than a small hamlet in the Meerut district (it is at 29°3'N and 78°1'E). Its history lies buried in its many ancient mounds, some of which have been excavated, revealing that the site is more than three millenium old. The Jains consider it the birthplace of three of their Tirthankaras : Santinatha, Kunthunatha and Aranatha.

No signs remain there of any Jain monuments dating from Banarasi's times. Many of the existing Jain temples, however, stand on ancient mounds, concealing the debris of older structures. An image of Santinatha dated 1176 A.D. was uncovered during repairs from the mound on which the present Santinatha nasiya (Digambara shrine) is situated.[2]

Jinaprabha Suri (14th century A. D.) had seen four Jain temples here: three to Santi, Kunthu and Ara and a fourth to Amba Devi, worshipped as a goddess by the Jains.[3]

Ahicchatra

Ahicchatra (28°5'N and 79°25'E), the Vedic Panchachakra, is another ancient town. The name Ahicchatra dates from *Mahabharata* days, when it was the capital of Pancala. The place is sacred to the Jains because Tirthankara Parsvanatha spent some time here performing ascetic meditations. There was a large shrine to Parsvanatha here in Jinaprabha's days with seven water reservoirs (kundas) to its east.[4] Today no monuments, even from the 17th century, survive. The

1 *Aligarh Gazetteer*, 1909, p. 163.
2 *Meerut District Gazetteer*, see under 'Hastinapur'.
3 *Vividha Tirtha Kalpa, Hastinapura Kalpa*, no. 16.
4 *Ibid., Ahicchatranagari Kalpa*, no. 7.

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ancient city has been reduced to an insignificant village with many mounds around it, some of which have revealed a history as old as that of Hastinapur.

Verse 588
The twelve observances or vratas

The twelve observances or vratas, as they are called, sum up the ideal conduct and way of life of a Jain householder. They comprise the five anuvratas we have spoken of earlier,[1] plus three gunavratas and four siksavratas. The gunavratas and siksavratas are, in truth, corollaries to the anuvratas.

The gunavratas consist of self-imposed constraints on needless movement and intemperate actions. The first vrata, called the digvirativrata, consists of a resolve that a man shall limit his movements, or what may be termed his comings and goings, to certain directions and within a restricted distance. The point is that a man can do no harm in a place he does not visit nor can he be tempted by what he does not see.

The second gunavrata, the bhogaparimanavrata, is a resolve to restrain oneself from excesses in food, clothing, perfumes, carriages and the like. This vrata consists of fourteen niyamas or rules of conduct described earlier.[2]

The third gunavrata, the anarthadandaviramana, is avoidance of frivolous or intemperate behaviour, such as indulgence in gossip, gambling, merriment, playfulness and similar vicious or pointless activity. These lead one astray from the true ascetic path.

The four siksavratas are samayika, desavakasika, pausadhopavasa and atithisamvibhaga. Samayika we have

1 See notes on verses 46-65.

2 See notes on verses 271-275.

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already discussed.[1] The second, desavakasika, is a gradual and deliberate narrowing of the resolved confines of the area defined in the first gunavrata. Pausadhopavasa consists in keeping regular fasts and performing rituals. The final vrata, atithisamvibhaga, is proper care of guests, especially Jain monks who are entirely dependent on house-holders for their sparse but select needs.

Verses 592-593
The *Samayasara*

Samayasara is a well known Jain text by Kundakunda of the early Christian era. The most celebrated heuristic commentary on this work is the *Atmakhyativrtti* of Amritacandra written in medieval times. The *Vrtti* is in prose but is interspersed with a number of verses aiming at attractively paraphrasing and summing up the doctrine expounded. These verses came to be extolled as 'kalasa', or 'urns' containing invaluable thought, and gained a wide circulation, much greater than the more erudite portions of the *Vrtti* which remained inaccessible to the layman.

Rajmalla Pāṇḍe's commentary

Rajmalla Pande wrote a Hindi prose commentary in the Dhundari dialect (spoken in the Jaipur region of Rajasthan) on these kalasas at the close of the 16th century. This Hindi work, entitled *Samayasara Kalasa Balabodha Tika*: 'Explanations of the Kalasa Verses of the *Samayasara* for the Less Learned', attracted immediate attention. It was of immense help to Banarasi in his own attempts at fathoming the *Samayasara*. Later, when Banarasi wrote the *Samayasaranataka*, a free translation into Hindi verse of the kalasas, he acknowledged his debt to Rajmalla. "Rajmalla Pande," he writes in the epilogue to this work, "is deeply versed in Jain religion and has plumbed the depths of the *Samayasara*. His *Balabodha* commentary on the work has made it accessible to all."[2]

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1 See notes on verses 46-65.

2 *Samayasaranataka*, Epilogue, verse 23.

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Verses 596–600

The works listed here are small, incidental compositions. They form a part of *Banarasi Vilas*—a collection of Banarasi's shorter writings—made by Jagjivan in A. D. 1644, almost immediately after the poet's death. Jagjivan belonged to a widening circle of Jain religious free-thinkers in Agra who accepted Banarasi as their leader. This was the Adhyatma group of which we have spoken in detail in our Introduction.

The Dhyan Battisi

The *Dhyan Battisi* is a work in thirty-four verses (not thirty-two as the title suggests) composed in the caupai and doha metres. It is a brief paraphrase of some Jain notions concerning different types of meditation : good, evil, proper and improper. Only sukla ('white', 'pure') meditation, says Banarasi, can lead to the intuitive knowledge that liberates.[1]

The Gyan Pacisi

The *Gyan Pacisi*, as the title indicates, is a poem in twenty-five verses on a common religious theme : Banarasi exhorts men to give up worldly attachments and dedicate themselves to the goal of acquiring transcendental knowledge.

Adhyatma Ke Git

There is no work entitled *Adhyatma Ke Git* in the *Banarasi Vilas*. It is perhaps not the title of any specific piece but a descriptive phrase meaning 'spiritual songs'. Jagjivan's collection has a number of such songs, collected under the heading *Adhyatma Pada Pankti* ('A String of Songs to the Spirit'). These perhaps are what Banarasi means by *Adhyatma Ke Git*. The *Banarasi Vilas* contains twenty-one such songs. A few more have been discovered recently. True to their genre, they are set to ragas like Ramkali, Bilaval, Barwa, Dhanasri etc. It is unlikely that Banarasi set them to music himself. He may have been able to sing simple ballad-like tunes to which poems such as *Mirgavati* were set,[2] but he

1 *Banarasi Vilas*, Jaipur, 1954, pp. 140-143.

2 See notes on verses 335-336.

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speaks nowhere of his accomplishments in music and does not seem to have been proficient in the art. We do not, however, know who put his songs to music. As with most songs of the period, the original music does not survive.

Sivamandir

The work here named *Sivamandir* is perhaps the same as the hymn entitled the *Kalyanamandir Stotra* in *Banarasi Vilas* : 'kalyana' is a synonym of 'siva' and Banarasi here seems to have again followed the common practice of replacing a synonym with another to facilitate versification. Banarasi's Hindi hymn is a translation in 44 verses of the celebrated Sanskrit homage to Parsvanatha by Kumudacandra.[1]

kabitta

The kabitta, a metre in four feet, each of 31 syllables, was very popular with contemporary poets because it was excellently suited for exhibiting virtuosity. Many one-verse poems of brilliant texture and compact design have been composed in this form.

A number of kabittas on various themes are found in the *Banarasi Vilas*, but we do not know which kabittas Banarasi has in mind here. Perhaps he means those verses which have been collected under the heading 'Miscellaneous'—phutkara—by Jagjivan.[2]

Sāṅgāner

Sanganer, where Banarasi went to attend a marriage, was later to become an important centre for the dissemination of his religious thought.[3]

Sanganer is a small town about 6 miles south of Jaipur in Rajasthan. Earlier called Sangramapura, it is

1 As Banārasī himself acknowledges in the last verse; see *Banarasi Vilas*, p. 128, verse 44.

2 *Banarasi Vilas*, pp. 196-202.

3 See our Introduction, pp. xxxix, lvii-lxi.

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believed to have been founded by a Kacchwaha prince called Sanga, a son of Prithviraj who ascended the throne at nearby Amber in A.D.1553. The history of the town, however, antedates Sanga, because an old Jain temple in the town bears an inscription dating A.D.954 and houses images installed in the 11th century. [1]

Verses 602–605

Of his three fun–loving sacrilegious friends, Banarasi had known Than for many years.[2] His *Gyan Pacisi*, composed in A.D. 1623–1624, is dedicated to Udaykarana.[3] He must have known him too for some time. Of Chandrabhan there is no other mention.

Verses 615–617
Shāh Jahān's ascension

Shah Jahan was in the Deccan when Jahangir died on November 7th, A.D. 1627 (Vikram 1684), on his way back from his beloved Kashmir. On hearing the news, Shah Jahan immediately sent instructions to his father–in–law, Asaf Khan, in Agra to have his royal cousins, contenders to the throne, murdered. Shah Jahan was proclaimed emperor in Lahore on the last day of A.D. 1627, but he actually ascended the throne two months later on February 24th, A.D. 1628: that is, as Banarasi reports, about four months after his father's death.

Banarasi gives us only a part of the regal title Shah Jahan had assumed, which in full was 'Abul Muzaffar Shahbuddin Muhammad Sahib-e-Kiran-e-Sani'.

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1 K. C. Jain, *Ancient Cities and Towns of Rajasthan*, Delhi, 1972, pp. 203-209.

2 See *Ardhakathanaka*, verses 394-398 and our notes.

3 *Banarasi Vilas*, p. 125. The reference is oblique and hence doubtful. Banārasī says: "Arise, O mind, Banārasī guides you with true knowledge. He writes for his own understanding and that of Udaykaraṇa"; this last phrase, however, could also mean 'and upliftment'— a purport which 'udaya karaṇa' understood in a general sense will bear.

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Verse 624
Chātsū

Chatsu, now known as Chaksu, which Banarasi visited at this period, is another town near Jaipur, 26 miles to its south. It is also an old town, earlier named Campavati, when in the 6th century the Guhillas ruled over it. In the 17th century, when Banarasi visited Chatsu, it was still a significant centre of Jain learning as it had been for centuries past.

About three decades after Banarasi's visit, Bhattaraka Narendrakirti, an important Digambara teacher of the town, had a pillar installed in a temple dedicated to Neminatha in A.D. 1649.[1] Narendrakirti later became an influential opponent of Banarasi's unorthodox religious views and wrote a harsh polemical work denouncing them. It would be interesting to surmise that he had actually met Banarasi in Chatsu, but considering the period in which Narendrakirti's active career falls, this seems unlikely.[2]

Verses 625–629
Suktimuktavali

Suktimuktavali was composed in co-authorship with Kanwarpal, as is acknowledged at the end of the poem.[3] The work was completed on the 11th of the summer month of Baisakh in Vikram 1691 (A.D. 1634).[4] It is a free translation into Hindi verse of a collection of short didactic poems in Sanskrit, written in a popular epigrammatic manner. The original is believed to be by Somaprabhacarya. It is called *Sinduraprakara* in the Sanskrit and was written sometime between the 13th and 15th centuries.

The two translators seem to have divided much of the work between them, and many stanzas, therefore, bear their individual signatures. But a sizeable number do not carry any name, and may have been joint efforts.

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1 K. C. Jain, *Ancient Cities and Towns of Rajasthan*; see under 'Chatsu'.
2 See also our Introduction, pp. lx-lxi.
3 See Colophon, *Suktimuktavali*, *Banarasi Vilas*, p. 71.
4 *Ibid.*, *loc cit.*

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Adhyatmabattisi

The *Adhyatmabattisi* is a paraphrase in thirty–two verses of the basic tenets of Jain metaphysics.

Paidi

The work Banarasi calls *Paidi* is obviously short for *Moksa Ki Paidi*, a poem written in Punjabi–dominated Hindi. The didactic theme has nothing new to offer, but the form is unusual and arresting.

Phag Dhamal

There is a small, song–like poem entitled *Adhyatam Phag*[1] in the *Banarasi Vilas*. This is, in all likelihood, the work that Banarasi refers to here as *Phag Dhamal*. 'Dhamal' or 'dhamar' is the name of a certain rhythm associated with the spring festival occurring in the month of Phalgun. Hence the name *Phag Dhamar* is for spring songs. This originally joyous, erotic song-form was also used to express a very different sentiment, as in the hands of Banarasi, whose *Adhyatam Phag* is a poem on the spiritual life.

Sindhu Caturdasi

Sindhu Caturdasi, or 'Fourteen Stanzas on the Sea', is another short work on the life of the Spirit. The sea, in conventional analogy, was the symbol for the phenomenal world, its fearful temptations and attachments, which one had to leave behind in order to reach the shores of liberation. The full title for this poem in the *Banarasi Vilas* is *Bhavasindhu Ki Caturdasi*, a name which makes the analogy between the sea and the world all the more explicit, for 'bhava' means 'the world'.[2]

Siva Pacisi

The *Siva Pacisi*[3] has twenty-six verses (not twenty-five as the name might lead one to assume) ostensibly in praise of Lord Siva; but a play on the word 'siva'—which also means 'the good', 'the beneficent'—enables the poet to speak really of the path of mystic knowledge.

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1 *Ibid.*, pp. 153-156.
2 See pp. 152-153.
3 *Ibid.*, pp. 149-152.

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Sahasatthottara Nama

Sahasatthottara Nama, or *Jina Sahasra Nama* as it is titled in the *Banarasi Vilas*,[1] is a poem listing a thousand and eight names of the Tirthankara. It is modelled on such ancient works as the *Visnusahasra Nama* which lists a string of a thousand names of Visnu. Similar Jain works exist in Sanskrit. Banarasi's *Sahasra Nama*, which is in Hindi, was evidently designed for popular readership. It was completed on the fifth of the bright half of Sravana, Vikram 1690 (A.D. 1633).[2]

Karmachatisi

Karmachatisi, also included in the *Banarasi Vilas*,[3] is a poem in thirty-seven doha verses. The subject matter is the Jain doctrine of the soul and karma.

Jhulna

The work named *Jhulna* is perhaps the same as the *Parmarath Hindolna* included in the *Banarasi Vilas* : 'hindolna' and 'jhulna' are synonyms. 'Hindolna'–literally 'a swing'—is the name for songs connected with the rain festival, during which girls and young women swing the whole day singing songs of merriment. Banarasi's *Hindolna*, like his *Adhyatam Phag*, is a spiritualised version of an otherwise festive theme. It has eight verses.[4]

Ankhen Doi Vidhi

No work named *Ankhen Doi Vidhi* is to be found in the *Banarasi Vilas*. But among the songs collected as *Adhyatma Pada Pankti*, there are two, of eight verses each, which are connected with the theme of two contrary kinds of visions: the vision of a man who looks at the world with passion and attachment and that of the spiritual man who sees all with the inner eye of truth.[5] These two distinct songs

1 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
2 *Ibid.*, verse 103, p. 16.
3 *Ibid.*, pp. 136-139.
4 *Ibid.*, pp. 237-238.
5 *Ibid.*, pp. 234-236.

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seem to have been originally conceived as one and named *Ankhen Doi Vidhi.*

vacanikā

A vacanika was a short, discursive prose piece. The two that Banarasi wrote are collected in the *Banarasi Vilas* as *Paramartha Vacanika* and *Upadana Nimitta Ki Chitthi.*[1] The second work, though entitled a 'chitthi', 'a letter', is not in the epistolary form, and indeed the caption at its end clearly identifies it as a vacanika.[2]

The first vacanika contains a brief survey of Jain doctrine : it speaks of the way in which true knowledge may be acquired and the stages leading to it. The second has a similar theme, being again a discourse on the spiritual path.

Banarasi's vacanikas provide us with interesting examples of early Hindi prose. Yet, surprisingly, Banarasi's style is by no means archaic or inadequate. However, due to the analytic, discursive nature of the writing, there are more unchanged Sanskrit words, even long compounds, in these pieces than in his verse.

aṣṭaka

An astaka meant a poem in eight verses. The following poems in the *Banarasi Vilas* come under this category : (1) *Saradastaka,* a hymn addressed to Jain doctrine, personified as the Goddess of Speech (it has 10 verses, not 8);[3] (2) *Avasthastaka,* which treats of the stages through which the soul passes on its way to enlightenment, classifying all knowledge on this basis; (3) *Satdarsanastaka,* which contains one-verse summaries of six different world-views: Saiva, Bauddha, Vedanta, Nyaya, Mimamsa and Jain.

A number of songs in *Adhyatma Pada Pankti,* too, have

1 *Ibid.,* pp. 207-215 and 215-221.
2 *Ibid.,* p. 221.
3 *Ibid.,* pp. 165-167.

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eight verses[1] and were evidently conceived as astakas; one is indeed entitled astapadi, a synonym for astaka.

Verses 630-639
Rūpchand Pāṇḍe

Not much is known about Rupchand, whom Banarasi recognises as his true guru and with whom he and his friends studied the famous Digambara text, the *Gommatasara*. Rupchand must have been a formally trained Digambara scholar as his title 'Pande' suggests.

The *Gommatasara*

The *Gommatasara* was written by Nemicandra in the 10th century with the aim of teaching Jain doctrine to Chamundaraya, popularly known as Gommata, a minister of the Ganga king Rajmalla of Karnataka. Based on the *Dhavala*, a lengthy commentary on the *Satkhandagama*, a foundational text of the Digambara Jains, it succinctly summarises the tenets of that order.

guṇasthāna

What interested Banarasi most in this work was its doctrine of gunasthanas.

Consciousness, according to the Jains and Indian spiritual thinking in general, is characterized by an infinite variety of states, ranged hierarchically. The lowest is a state of delusion and utter bondage; the highest of omniscience and complete freedom. In between lie many stages through which a soul passes in its journey from bondage to freedom. These stages, according to the *Gommatasara*, are fourteen in number. Beyond them lies the state of omniscience where the soul shines forth in its own inherent knowledge. Only a properly equipped spiritual seeker can pass from one stage to the next. This equipment, according to the Jains, consists in the following three things: right vision (samyakdarsana), right knowledge (samyakjnana) and right conduct (samyakcaritra).

1 Song numbers 6, 7, 8 & 16.

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Banarasi has himself described the gunasthanas and the soul's journey through them at some length in his *Samayasaranataka*. The first stage, the stage of false vision, is the mithyadrishti gunasthana. The soul at this stage remains shrouded in utter darkness and falsehood. There are, however, degrees of blindness within this stage itself. Some utterly dull souls are so totally at a physical, beast-like level that they are entirely unaware of a higher consciousness. Others, grasping a partial truth, hold on to it thinking that what they envision is the only truth and the whole truth. Some deluded souls consider all doctrines as equally true and all faiths as equally worthy of devotion, thus revealing a complete lack of discrimination. Others, lost in a state of perplexity, wander restlessly, turning from one false doctrine to another, remaining totally confused about the real truth. A marked trait of this stage is the stubborn denial of the truth of Jain tenets—a truth beyond question, for they have been propounded by the all-knowing Tirthankaras—and clinging, contrarily, to an alien faith and code of conduct.[1]

Many souls never rise above this ignorant level. Those who do, reach the gunasthana called sasadana where the soul has a fleeting vision of the true goal and a faint taste of ultimate perfection. The vision then becomes gradually steadier and the understanding of it more intense as one passes through the next gunasthana, the misra (the mixed), to the pramattasamyata, a state in which a higher consciousness begins to become relatively steadfast, though still eluding a firm grasp. A yet steadier footing is achieved at the next stage, the apramattasamyata, a stage at which a spiritual seeker is likely to have become a monk, since a more committed asceticism and renunciation is now required of him if he aims to proceed still further.

1 *Samayasaranataka*, Adhikāra 13 (guṇasthānādhikāra), verses 10-18.

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From the next stage onwards, the soul begins to acquire an inner strength which helps it to actively remove the veil of karma and regain its in-born vision. The eighth gunasthana is therefore called apurvakarana because, in Banarasi's words, the spiritual seeker can now do something he was powerless to do earlier, namely, shape his own future progress more effectively. Once the next gunasthana, anivrittakarana is gained, there is no slipping back (as the name implies). Slowly, now, the accumulated karma particles begin to drop away from the soul, allowing the natural light of perfect awareness to emanate from it. The passions are put to rest except for a subtle form of greed which disappears at the next gunasthana, the suksma-samparaya, where the only desire that remains is the desire for liberation. A steady progress now leads to the thirteenth gunasthana, the sayogi, so named because, though all binding karma has been exhausted by this stage, a few ego particles remain: those that give a man his rudimentary individuality of name, age and social identity (gotra). These remaining vestiges of bondage disappear only with kevala jnana, which is the goal, the final stage lying beyond the gunasthanas. In kevala a soul is nothing but knowledge, free from the fetters of the world and the endless, agonising cycle of birth and death. The best of those men who reach this stage become Tirthankaras, men who ford a spiritual path for others to follow, preaching the truth out of their infinite, flawless knowledge.

Banarasi found the gunasthana doctrine profoundly satisfying for it gave meaning to much that he had found pointless and revolting: ritualistic practices and ordained formal patterns of behaviour which he had so long rejected as dead and empty. These now fell into place as significant and purposeful within the total spiritual journey. Rituals were necessary in the early stages of a man's spiritual progress

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because they helped to formulate his quest and give it the right direction. Later, when the spiritually advanced seeker had transcended them, he could, in the light of his new perfected knowledge, realise their relative importance with fuller understanding, recognising and synthesising them as an essential part of an indispensable scheme. Banarasi speaks of this total scheme as Syadvada, the Jain doctrine of Relativism.

Syādvāda

The way Banarasi understood Syadvada may again be gleaned from his *Samayasaranataka*. He was not interested in the theory as a purely philosophical doctrine embodying a distinct stand in logic and epistemology. To him it was significant as a teaching which revealed the relativity of moral and spiritual vision: the same thing, or rather action, could appear different with a difference in focus, perspective and point of view (known technically as naya). It allowed him a relative way of looking at man's doings in the light of a growing spiritual life. A single stance could provide only an incomplete and hence false idea of Truth with its infinite, even seemingly contradictory attributes, recognisable as real only from the point of view of a changing stance. Syadvada thus meant for Banarasi an awareness of the possibility of multiple ways of judging: it was for him the philosophical rationale behind the gunasthana doctrine, allowing each distinct stage in spiritual progress a contextual reality of its own.

niścayanaya vyavahāranaya

Even ordinary language very often gives the false impression that any single judgement about a thing is in some way final and all-exhaustive. To remove this misunderstanding and keep our judgements open-ended (anekanta), the Jains suggest that every proposition expressing a truth should be prefaced by the prefix 'syat', indicating that other, equally true even though seemingly contradictory statements can also be made about the thing being talked of. Hence the name Sya-

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dvada for this doctrine. Knowledge expressed in and through language is perforce fragmentary and segmented. Speech is incapable of manifesting the endless attributes of a simultaneously multifaceted reality except through a succession of discrete words or sentences which say one thing at a time and never encompass the whole in a single grasp. On the level of ordinary understanding, which is interpenetrated with language, Truth in its entirety cannot but be a pooling together of partial judgements expressed in propositions manifesting different view- points and aspects of a thing. This is an approximation of Truth which can only become really holistic in the profound and ultimate intuitive grasp achieved in kevala jnana, an omniscience unfettered by language.

This ultimate intuition is also the supreme transcendental illumination, the final all-knowing point of view (naya) of the Tirthankara. In it there is no touch of falsehood or indefiniteness: it is therefore known as niscayanaya, the ultimate, determinate vision (naya). It is a category quite apart from all other knowings, which are of a lower order and remain tied down to shifting contexts. Such knowings are grouped together as vyavaharanaya: the changing view-points of ordinary day-to-day living. Niscayanaya alone reflects reality as it is, vyavaharanaya gives us only appearance. All gunasthana states of consciousness, asserts Banarasi (following a major strand in Jain thinking, akin in many ways to Vedanta), whether lower or higher, are equally false when seen from the final niscayanaya point of view; so are differentiations between good-bad, sin-piety, right-wrong. Ultimate vision transcends these dualities. Still, good, pious and right actions as taught in Jain canons are to be emulated because they lead away from the world of appearance to the Truth.[1]

All existent things, according to the Jains, can be

1 *Samayasaranataka, Jivadvara*, verses 5-6.

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divided into two basic categories: jiva or conscious being and ajiva or dead, unconscious matter. Jiva is in essence free and made of the stuff of knowledge. It is also an active agent and remains tied down to matter through karma, which is itself a form of matter, veiling the true vision of the jiva like a dark film and making it ignorant of its true self. This state of ignorance is known as bandha or bondage. Erroneous or impure states of consciousness, called papa, which include feelings or dispositions such as anger, pride, deceit, greed and the like, keep the soul tied down to karma. Good inner movements, or punya, result in freedom from delusion, leading to right faith and understanding. They inspire the jiva to undertake the observance of the five mahavratas and other ascetic practices ordained in the Jain canon. Though, in the final analysis, these too are karma, yet they constitute karma which leads ultimately to the removal of the karmic bond. This is effected through a two-fold process. The first process is samvara or non-accmulation of new karma, a state achieved through such inner activity as non-violence, ascetic restraint, right conduct and right meditation. Then, through further penances occurs nirjara or removal of accummulated karma, leading ultimately to freedom.

Samayasara-nataka

This, in essence, is the subject matter of Banarasi's *Samayasaranataka*, his most ambitious work, where his poetic powers too, are at their best. The work is mostly written in the architectonic and resonant kabitta and savaiya metres. Banarasi succeeds in making obtuse spiritual discourse lucid through simple, homely analogies.

The *Samayasaranataka*, which was completed on the 13th of the bright half of Asvin, Vikram 1693 (A.D. 1636), also contains interesting autobiographical material, throwing light on the later life of Banarasi when he was growing into a formidable spiritual leader in Agra.

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In the epilogue to the *Samayasaranataka*, Banarasi names five friends with whom he was in the habit of discussing the problems of the spiritual life. One of the works they discussed was the *Samayasara* itself.

Banarasi's five companions who shared his spiritual interests were Pandit Rupchand, Chaturbhuj, Bhagvatidas, Kanwarpal and Dharamdas. Dharamdas we have spoken of earlier.[1] We have also spoken earlier of a Rupchand Pande, with whom Banarasi studied the *Gommatasara*. Pandit Rupchand was a different person. Banarasi speaks of him as a friend and an equal, not as a guru.[2] Two works which may be ascribed with some assurance to Pandit Rupchand have been discovered during the last decades. One is a collection of a hundred doha verses and is called *Dohrasata*. It is on spiritual themes. The other is a song copied in the hand of Kanwarpal, another member of Banarasi's intimate group, and has been discovered among his personal collection of manuscripts.

Kanwarpal had collaborated with Banarasi in translating the *Suktimuktavali*, written in Vikram 1691, three years before the completion of the *Samayasaranataka*. The two must surely have become friends before they took up this joint project.

Banarasi's age

When Banarasi completed his autobiography, he was 55 years old. He had, he says, lived half the life of 110 years allotted to man. Thus he called his story *Ardhakathanaka*

1 See notes on verses 352-358.

2 Nathuram Premi argues that the two were different because the *Samayasaranataka*, which speaks of Pandit Rupchand as a living person, was completed after the death of Rupchand Pande. This argument, however, has a flaw. Banarasi reports in verses 629-630 that Rupchand Pande came to Agra in Vikram 1692 and died two years later (verse 635) in Vikram 1694. But the *Samayasara* was completed in Vikram 1693, about a year before he died.

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or *Half a Tale*. According to an age-old popular tradition, a man's allotted life is a hundred years. Banarasi was evidently following another tradition, perhaps of a Jain origin.

In an interesting kabitta preserved in the *Banarasi Vilas*, Banarasi has divided a man's 110 years into a number of stages. The first is the stage of childhood, which he says continues upto the age of 10. Then there is a period of growth till a man is 20. He retains a handsome physique till 30. His mind remains sharp till he is 40, and his body powerful till 50. He keeps his eyesight till 60 and his power of hearing for ten more years. He retains his virility upto the age of 80. His sense organs function till 90 but he continues to remain in his senses upto 100, after which he may live for another ten years.[1]

Banarasi himself did not much outlive his autobiography. The last work from his pen that has come down to us is the *Karmaprakrti Vidhana*, a short tract on karma, written two years after the *Ardhakathanaka* in Vikram 1700, that is, A.D. 1643. Jagjivan compiled the *Banarasi Vilas* a short while later in Vikram 1701 (A.D. 1644).

1 *Banarasi Vilas*, p. 200. The verse is no. 13 of the miscellaneous verses collected under the head 'Prāstāvik Phuṭkar Kavitta'.

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Appendix I
Excerpts from the Yuktiprabodha

The exact date of the *Yuktiprabodha* by the Svetambara monk Meghavijaya is unknown, but there are definite clues that help us determine its time with a fair degree of accuracy. It was written after Hemraj Pande's *Sitapata Chaurasi Bol*, which it names and cites.[1] Hemraj's work is dated Vikram 1709, that is, A.D. 1652, and was published eight years after Banarasi's posthumous *Banarasi Vilas*.

Meghavijaya was a prolific writer and many works from his pen have survived. A number of them are dated and show that the monk had a long career as an author. The earliest known work by him is a gloss entitled *Vijayadeva Mahatmya Vivarana* which was written in Vikram 1709, the year Hemraj wrote his *Sitapata Chaurasi Bol*. His last extant work is a poem named *Saptasandhana Mahakavya*, written fifty-one years later in Vikram 1760 or A.D. 1703.

1 Introduction to *Digvijaya Mahakavyam*, p. 3.

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Unlike many of his other works, the *Yuktiprabodha* does not record the date of its composition. Yet Meghavijaya informs us that he wrote the work during the pontificate of the Tapagaccha monk Vijayaratna Suri.[1] From this fact we can infer that the work was written some time after Vikram 1750 or A.D. 1693, which was the year Vijayaratna took over as pontif. Meghavijaya was a frequent visitor to Agra. Apparently, he observed the alarming growth of Adhyatma for a few decades in that town before taking up his pen against it.

The *Yuktiprabodha* comprises twenty-five gatha verses in Prakrit on which the author himself has written an extensive commentary in Sanskrit prose. The work runs into 220 pages and is available in only one, now rare, edition, published by the Rishabhdev Kesarimal Shvetambara Samstha, Ratlam, 1928. Most of its polemic is of a purely sectarian interest. We have chosen from it passages relevant to Banarasi and his ideas. The numbers appended in brackets with the commentary refer to the page numbers in the Ratlam edition.

The Yuktiprabodha

(Excerpts from the author's foreword, pp. 2–3)

The author of the present tract discovered that in Ugrasenapura (Agra) a good many people of our (Svetambara) faith have begun to call themselves Adhyatmikas. These people are also known as 'Varanasiyas' because their views are inspired by the imaginary but attractive ideas propagated by a Jain named Banarasidas who has succeded in deluding them and leading them astray. It is likely that Jain monks and house-holders of coming generations might confusedly think that the Adhyatmikas, like the Digambaras,

1 *Yuktiprabodha*, vṛtti on verse 25.

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are an ancient sect and that their views [though heretical] have a basis in age-old religious canons. Therefore, I propose to inquire into the origins of this sect and expose its views. Nor should it be thought that an examination and rebuttal of Digambara doctrines. .. (atask already accomplished satisfactorily by our old acaryas) . .is sufficient to expose the Adhyatmikas too; for though they share some ideas and practices with the Digambaras, they form a separate group and are quite distinct in their origins and teachings.

Verse 1

I bow to the Tirthankara Mahavira, who subdues false and conceited opinions just as a lion subdues the lesser animals.

I will now expose the views of Banarasidas for the enlightenment of the good people, so that they may see them for what they are.

Commentary : Our ancient acaryas (i e., monk-teachers of the Svetambara order) have plainly revealed in their arguments that the Digambaras belong to the first gunasthana (they are, in other words, ignorant of the Truth)—what to speak of their recent followers, the Adhyatmikas....

Verse 2

Banarasidas was a merchant of the Srimal clan of vaisyas and lived in the city of Agra. He was, by birth, a lay-worshipper of the Kharataragaccha sect of Svetambara Jains.

Verse 3

In the early part of his life, he was a devoted follower of the precepts of the faith he was born to, diligently observing every prescribed fast, ritual and penance. He had also made a thorough study of the canonic texts (concerning religious duties) such as the *Avasyaka*, and knew the right, ordained conduct for householders as well as monks.

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Verse 4

Later, swayed by the overpowering influence of time, and blinded by false vision, he began to harbour doubts about the truth of his earlier convictions.

Commentary: We are, at present, passing through the dusama phase of the cyclic wheel of time, a phase of cosmic moral degradation. Banarasi too, could not escape its evil influence.

He found that the observances decreed as anuvratas in the scriptures were corrupted by transgressions and malpractices (aticaras). This caused his vision to become deluded by false considerations and he grew sceptical towards sacred precepts, asking himself questions like: what was the original form given to these practices by Tirthankaras and what is the fashion in which they are observed today by monks and householders ? A religious observance, he thought, could lead to enlightenment only if practised rightly and with full awareness of its true purport...

Verse 5

Once, while he was in the midst of a rigorous fast (vrata), he developed an inordinate craving for food and drink. This led him to question his earlier resolution.

Verse 6

He asked the monks (gurunam) whether a man who observes a practice in its external form (kevalakriya) while his mind remains full of impure thoughts, can ever achieve the desired goal.

Verse 7

He was told that a man who errs in his intentions and thoughts but mechanically observes rituals can never attain anything. This convinced Banarasi of the meaninglessness of observing rituals and decreed practices.

Verse 8

Meanwhile, five other men had gathered around him and their company drew him further away from his parent faith (i. e., Svetambarism).

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Commentary (pp. 13–14): As Banarasi was busy broadcasting his scepticism, denouncing rituals and ordained practices, he acquired five associates named Rupchand, Chaturbhuj, Bhagvatidas, Kanwarpal and Dharamdas. The influence of these friends made him all the more disdainful towards practices he had earlier followed faithfully. The devout questioned him: "What has made you give up religious practices ?" His mind full of doubts, he answered: "I have no use for formal practices (vyavahara). The soul becomes bound to the world through karma, a bond which arises out of falsehood (mithyatva)...; therfore a man desiring liberation should give up falsehood. And this can be done only through the acquisition of Truth (samyaktva), and consists in the attainment of a spiritual state of being. No amount of effort can help one reach this state, which emerges on its own when the time is ripe. It is profitless, therefore, to perform rituals or ascetic exercises for this purpose, for these can never lead to salvation (moksa). The right path for a man striving after enlightenment is to examine and meditate over the nature of truth(tattvapariksa vidheya), because practices ordained in the *Avasyaka* and other scriptures can get him nowhere...(p. 26)." Attempts were made by right-thinking people to bring Banarasi back to Svetambara beliefs. They reasoned with him in every manner, citing appropriate passages from sacred authoritative texts. But to no avail. On the contrary, he began to find fault with the Svetambara belief in the Ten Wonders (dasascarya) and the like, and to proclaim the truth of his own free-thinking views (svamata), and gradually collected a big following... .

Verse 9

He was attracted to Digambara texts concerning mystic doctrines (adhyatma) and his faith in Digambarism grew. Yet he could not bring himself to accept such formal pract-

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ices of the Digambaras as the use of the picchika and the kamandalu.

Commentary: He revered only those texts of the Digambaras which promulgate spiritual doctrine (adhyatma), denying authority to other texts which prescribe rules for rituals and precepts for right conduct (vratasamityadipratipadakagranthe na pramanyam). The Digambaras are an ancient sect who greatly honour their monks. But Banarasi had no faith in this order. He thought that it was improper for men who had renounced everything to carry about them a picchika and a kamandalu (such as the unclad Digambara monks do).

As for the Digambara *Puranas* (texts which bear an almost canonic authority in that sect), he believed in them with reservations, arguing that they aim mostly at enjoining rituals and formal mores of conduct. Verse 10

Commentary (pp. 27-28) : He accepted only such passages from these *Puranas* which accorded with his own views. For what he really wished was to assert his own independent opinions (yathachandatvajnapana)... : "I will have nothing to do with Digambara views," he said, "for I am a seeker after truth (and not a sectarian) ; only that which accords with the teachings of the Tirthankaras is to be upheld as valid and authoritative."

He wrote a work called the *Samayasara*, propagating his own views in colourful verses, in order to win over more people to his ways of thinking. Verse 11

Commentary (p. 30) : ...It might be argued that in writing a work which aims at explaining an ancient text, Banarasi was himself asserting old, well-established doctrines. This however is not true. Banarasi's real purport was to

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impart a canonic authority to his own novel ideas under the pretext of translating an old text, the true import of which he could never fathom.

Verse 12

Then he wrote the *Banarasi Vilas*, which is a collection of couplets and songs. He also translated Sanskrit hymns into Hindi for the benefit of the less learned.

Commentary (p. 32) : The purpose again was to boost his own views.... Those who were drawn to these views were men of the following kind : those who had no acquaintance with Jain scriptures or lacked faith in them despite familiarity ; those whose human failings did not permit them to accept any discipline; those who were so fond of sense-pleasures that they could not bring themselves to observe the ascetic practices enjoined in the sacred texts; and those who were too greedy to be charitable.... These people flocked to him because his sect had no monks to guide and supervise rituals or religious conduct (gurorabhavatkriyarahitya), nor did it require a man to practise charity.

Verse 13

He believed that a man who has inwardly realized the Truth is no longer bound by anything. Thinking thus, he did not consider it necessary to withdraw from worldly pleasures and he never practised restraint or renunciation, entirely giving up charity, asceticism and celibacy.

Commentary (p. 34): ... Though [in his *Samayasara*] there are passages like : "Those who follow a rule of conduct without being aware of its purport or those who think that they can attain enlightenment without following proper conduct...are both ignorant fools," and others which more specifically enjoin that "one should follow the twenty–one meritorious precepts and never partake of the twenty-two uneatables"—yet these are no more than mechanical

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repetition of ancient beliefs. They are like sacred words uttered by a parrot. Banarasi had no faith in them.... Had he truly believed in them, it would have been apparent in the conduct of his followers who do not observe any enjoined practice such as fasting or pratikramana atonements or samayika meditations.

Verse 14

He believed that a man who knew the Truth was thereby free of all bondage, and one who traversed the path of the Spirit was, through that very act, liberated of the fetters of karma.

Kanwarpal and others found these views congenial and became his followers.

Commentary (p. 35): ... His followers were mainly fellow merchants like Kanwarpal and others.

Verse 15

Though he did grant that great munis and solitary hermits living in forest retreats were men possessed of the twenty-eight special attributes and were pure souls, yet he declared that such men were not to be seen in the present age.

Verse 16

For this reason he declared that the bhattarakas (teachers) of the Digambara sect were also not worthy of veneration : no man, he argued, who has any possessions, however small (tilatusamatro), deserves the name of a monk (guru).

Verse 17

In this manner, he upheld views differing in many ways from the Digambaras. Some of his differences with them were of a major import while others were less consequential. He was, in truth, a man in love with his own independent ideas.

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Commentary (p. 56): ...The Adhyatmikas proclaim that they are neither Digambaras nor Svetambaras, but seekers after truth....

Verse 18

Banarasi's doctrines gave rise to a separate sect in the year Vikram 1680 (A. D. 1623).

Verse 19

After his death, the leadership of his sect (mata) passed on to Kanwarpal, a man greatly honoured by his followers and venerated as a guru.

Commentary (pp. 57–58) : Banarasi had no issues. After his death, a merchant named Kanwarpal became the leader of his sect which had now acquired firm roots. Believers were strengthened in their faith and their numbers swelled through the acquisition of new followers. The Varanasiyas respect and venerate Kanwarpal as a guru. His pronouncements are accepted as authoritative and final on the various issues that arise in discussions among the members of the sect. They do not revere any of the established gurus (monks) either of the Digambara or the Svetambara sect.

Verse 20

Banarasi forbade the use of garlands, ornaments and the like in the propitiation of Tirthankara images.

Commentary (pp. 58–59) : It was improper, said Banarasi, to adorn the Tirthankaras with lavish attire and costly jewellery, for to represent these god-like, world-renouncing teachers as pleasure-seeking hedonists was obviously an unseemly thing to do.... He argued that only a plain, unadorned Tirthankara image could truly represent a saint with no worldly attachments, and arouse in the beholder pure and exalted thoughts....

Verse 22

He had no faith in the authority of texts such as the *Acaranga* (the most ancient and authoritative canon of

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conduct for the Svetambaras); there was thus a great discord between his beliefs and those of the Svetambaras.

Commentary (p. 172) : ... These neo–Digambarites, the Varanasiyas, wished to win over the followers of the Svetambara sect to their own heretical beliefs, and Hemraj Pandit wrote a tract to this end consisting of eighty-four sayings... . There is, however, a great difference between this new group and the older Digambarites....

Verse 24

Due to the evil nature of the present epoch, men have become base and self–seeking. They do not practise charity and have no faith in Tirthankaras or their monk–gurus. Being deluded in heart, they feel naturally drawn towards such false doctrines [as that of Banarasi].

Commentary (p. 218): We are presently passing through the lowest phase of the downward movement of the cosmic wheel of time. Money is scarce. Even those who have wealth do not want to part with it. They are weary of charity and alms–giving and do not like to spend money on temple–building or religious ceremonies, or for honouring their monk–gurus... . People have become slothful in their thinking and are indifferent to censorious conduct. All they want is to indulge in sensual pleasures. Banarasi's views have a great appeal for such people and many have thus become his followers.

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Appendix II
Ardhakathanaka

Hindi text

श्रीपरमात्मने नमः । अथ बनारसीदासकृत अर्ध-कथानक लिख्यते

दोहरा

पानि-जुगुल-पुट सीस धरि, मानि अपनपौ दास ।
आनि भगति चित जानि प्रभु, वंदौं पास-सुपास ।। १ ।।

सवैया इकतीसा, बनारसी नगरीकी सिफथ

गंगमांहि आइ धसी द्वै नदी बरुना असी,
बीच बसी बनारसी नगरी बखानी है ।
कसिवार देस मध्य गांउ तातैं कासी नांउ,
श्रीसुपास-पासकी जनमभूमि मानी है ।।
तहां दुहू जिन सिवमारग प्रगट कीनौ,
तबसेती सिवपुरी जगतमैं जानी है ।
ऐसी विधि नाम थपे नगरी बनारसीके,
और भांति कहै सो तौ मिथ्यामत-बानी है ।। २ ।।

दोहरा

जिन पहिरी जिन-जनमपुर-नाम-मुद्रिका-छाप ।
सो बनारसी निज कथा, कहै आपसौं आप ।। ३ ।।

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चौपई

जैनधर्म श्रीमाल सुबंस । बानारसी नाम नरहंस ।।
तिन मनमांहि बिचारी बात । कहौं आपनी कथा बिख्यात ।। ४ ।।
जैसी सुनी बिलोकी नैन । तैसी कछू कहौं मुख-बैन ।।
कहौं अतीत-दोष-गुणवाद । बरतमानतांई मरजाद ।। ५ ।।
भावी दसा होइगी जथा । ग्यानी जानै तिसकी कथा ।।
तातैं भई-बात मन आनि । थूलरूप कछु कहौं बखानि ।। ६ ।।
मध्यदेसकी बोली बोलि । गर्भित बात कहौं हिय खोलि ।।
भाखूं पूरब-दसा-चरित्र । सुनहु कान धरि मेरे मित्र ।। ७ ।।

दोहरा

याही भरत सुखेतमैं, मध्यदेस सुभ ठांउ ।
बसै नगर रोहतगपुर, निकट बिहोली-गांउ ।। ८ ।।
गांउ बिहोलीमैं बसै, राजबंस रजपूत ।
ते गुरु-मुख जैनी भए, त्यागि करम अदभूत ।। ९ ।।
पहिरी माला मंत्रकी, पायौ कुल श्रीमाल ।
थाप्यौ गोत बिहोलिआ, बीहोली-रखपाल ।। १० ।।
भई बहुत बंसावली, कहौं कहाँ लौं सोइ ।
प्रगटे पुर रोहतगमैं, गांगा गोसल दोइ ।। ११ ।।
तिनके कुल बस्ता भयौ, जाकौ जस परगास ।
बस्तपालके जेठमल, जेठूके जिनदास ।। १२ ।।
मूलदास जिनदासके, भयौ पुत्र परधान ।
पढ़्यौ हिंदुगी पारसी, भागवान बलवान ।। १३ ।।
मूलदास बीहोलिआ, बनिक वृत्तिके भेस ।
मोदी ह्वै कै मुगलकौ, आयौ मालवदेस ।। १४ ।।

चौपई

मालवदेस परम सुखधाम । नरवर नाम नगर अभिराम ।।
तहां मुगल पाई जागीर । साहि हिमाऊंकौ बर बीर ।। १५ ।।
मूलदाससौं बहुत कृपाल । करै उचापति सौंपै माल ।।
संवत सोलहसै जब जान । आठ बरस अधिके परवान ।। १६ ।।

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सावन सित पंचमी रबिबार । मूलदास-घर सुत अवतार ।।
भयौ हरख खरचे बहु दाम । खरगसेन दीनौं यहु नाम ।। १७ ।।
सुखसौं बरस दोइ चलि गए । घनमल नाम और सुत भए ।।
बरस तीन जब बीते और । घनमल काल कियौ तिस ठौर ।। १८ ।।

दोहरा

घनमल घन-दल उड़ि गए, काल-पवन-संजोग ।
मात-तात तरुवर तए, लहि आतप सुत-सोग ।। १९ ।।

चौपई

लघु-सुत-सोक कियौ असराल । मूलदास भी कीनौं काल ।।
तेरहोत्तरे संबत बीच । पिता-पुत्रकौं आई मीच ।। २० ।।
खरगसेन सुत माता साथ । सोक-बिआकुल भए अनाथ ।।
मुगल गयौ थो काहू गांउ । यह सब बात सुनी तिस ठांउ ।। २१ ।।

दोहरा

आयौ मुगल उतावलो, सुनि मूलाकौ काल ।
मुहर-छाप घर खालसै, कीनौ लीनौ माल ।। २२ ।।
माता पुत्र भए दुखी, कीनौ बहुत कलेस ।
ज्यौं त्यौं करि दुख देखते, आए पूरब देस ।। २३ ।।

चौपई

पूरबदेस जौनपुर गांउ । बसै गोमती-तीर सुठांउ ।।
तहां गोमती इहि बिध बहै । ज्यौं देखी त्यौं कविजन कहै ।। २४ ।।

दोहरा

प्रथम हि दक्खनमुख बही, पूरब मुख परबाह ।
बहुरों उत्तरमुख बही, गोवै नदी अथाह ।। २५ ।।
गोवै नदी त्रिविधिमुख बही । तट रवनीक सुविस्तर मही ।।
कुल पठान जौनासह नांउ । तिन तहां आइ बसायो गांउ ।। २६ ।।
कुतबा पढ़्यौ छत्र सिर तानि । बैठि तखत फेरी निज आनि ।।
तब तिन तखत जौनपुर नांउ । दीनौ भयौ अचल सो गांउ ।। २७ ।।
चारौं बरन बसैं तिस बीच । बसहिं छतीस पौंनि कुल नीच ।।
बांभन छत्री बैस अपार । सूद्र भेद छत्तीस प्रकार ।। २८ ।।

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छत्तीस पौंन कथन । सवैया इकतीसा

सीसगर, दरजी, तंबोली, रंगबाल, ग्वाल,
बाढ़ई, संगतरास, तेली, धोबी, धुनियां ।
कंदोई, कहार, काछी, कलाल, कुलाल, माली,
कुंदीगर, कागदी, किसान, पटबुनियां ।।
चितेरा, बिंधेरा, बारी, लखेरा, ठठेरा, राज,
पटुवा, छप्परबंध, नाई, भार-भुनियां ।
सुनार, लुहार, सिकलीगर, हवाईगर,
धीवर, चमार, एई छत्तीस पउनियां ।। २९ ।।

चौपई

नगर जौनपुर भूमि सुचंग । मठ मंडप प्रासाद उतंग ।।
सोभित सपतखने गृह घने । सघनं पताका तंबू तने ।। ३० ।।
जहां बावन सराइ पुरकने । आसपास बावन परगने ।।
नगरमाहिं बावन बाज़ार । अरु बावन मंडई उदार ।। ३१ ।।
अनुक्रम भए तहां नव साहि । तिनके नांउ कहौं निरबाहि ।।
प्रथम साहि जौनासह जानि । दुतिय बवक्करसाहि बखानि ।। ३२ ।।
त्रितिय भयौ सुरहर सुलतान । चौथा दोस महम्मद जान ।।
पंचम भूपति साहि निजाम । छट्ठम साहि बिराहिम नाम ।। ३३ ।।
सत्तम साहिब साहि हुसैन । अठ्ठम गाजी सज्जित सैन ।।
नवम साहि बख्या सुलतान । बरती जासु अखंडित आन ।। ३४ ।।
ए नव साहि भए तिस ठांउ । यातैं तखत जौनपुर नांउ ।।
पूरब दिसि पटनालौं आन । पच्छिम हद्द इटावा थान ।। ३५ ।।
दक्खन बिंध्याचल सरहद्द । उत्तर परमित घाघर नद्द ।।
इतनी भूमि राज बिख्यात । बरिस तीनिसैकी यहु बात ।। ३६ ।।
हुते पुब्ब पुरखा परधान । तिनके बचन सुने हम कान ।।
बरनी कथा जथासु्त जेम । मृषा-दोष नहिं लागै एम ।। ३७ ।।
यह सब बरनन पाछिलौ, भयौ सुकाल बितीत ।
सोरहसै तेरै अधिक, समै कथा सुनु मीत ।। ३८ ।।
नगर जौनपुरमैं बसै, मदनसिंघ श्रीमाल ।
जैनी गोत चिनालिया, बनजै हीरा-लाल ।। ३९ ।।

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मदन जौंहरीकौ सदनु, ढूंढ़त बूझत लोग ।
खरगसेन मातासहित, आए करम-संजोग ।। ४० ।।
छजमल नाना सेनकौ, ताकौ अग्रज एह ।
दीनौ आदर अधिक तिन, कीनौ अधिक सनेह ।। ४१ ।।

चौपई

मदन कहै पुत्री सुनु एम । तुमहिं अवस्था व्यापी केम ।।
कहै सुता पूरव विरतंत । एहि बिधि मुए पुत्र अर कंत ।। ४२ ।।
सरवस लूटि लियो ज्यौं मीर । सो सब बात कही धरि धीर ।।
कहै मदन पुत्रीसौं रोइ । एक पुत्रसौं सब किछु होइ ।। ४३ ।।
पुत्री सोच न करु मनमांह । सुख-दुख दोऊ फिरती छांह ।।
सुता दोहिता कंठ लगाइ । लिए बस्त्र भूखन पहिराइ ।। ४४ ।।
सुखसौं रहहि न व्यापै काल । जैसा घर तैसी ननसाल ।।
बरिस तीनि बीते इह भांति । दिन दिन प्रीति रीति सुख सांति ।। ४५ ।।
आठ बरसकौ बालक भयौ । तब चटसाल पढ़नकौं गयौ ।।
पढ़ि चकसाल भयौ बितपन्न । परखै रजत-टका-सोवन्न ।। ४६ ।।
गेह उचापति लिखै बनाइ । अत्तो जमा कहै समुझाइ ।।
लेना देना बिधिसौं लिखै । बैठै हाट सराफी सिखै ।। ४७ ।।
बरिस च्यारि जब बीते और । तब सु करै उद्दमकी दौर ।।
पूरब दिसि बंगाला थान । सुलेमान सुलतान पठान ।। ४८ ।।
ताकौ साला लोदी खान । सो तिन राख्यौ पुत्र समान ।।
सिरीमाल ताकौ दीवान । नांउ राइ धंना जग जान ।। ४९ ।।
सींघड़ गोत्र बंगाले बसै । सेवैं सिरीमाल पांचसै ।।
पोतदार कीए तिन सर्व । भाग्य-संजोग कमावहिं दर्व ।। ५० ।।
करै बिसास न लेखा लेइ । सबकौं फारकती लिखी देइ ।।
पोसह-पड़िकौंनासौं पेम । नौतन गेह करनकौ नेम ।। ५१ ।।

दोहरा

खरगसेन बीहोलिया, सुनी राइकी बात ।
निज मातासौं मंत्र करि, चले निकसि परभात ।। ५२ ।।
माता किछु खरची दई, नाना जानै नांहि ।
ले घोरा असवार होइ, गए राइजी पांहि ।। ५३ ।।

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जाइ राइजीकौं मिल्यौ, कह्यौ सकल बिरतंत ।
करी दिलासा बहुत तिन, धरी बात उर अंत ।। ५४ ।।
एक दिवस काहू समै, मनमैं सोचि बिचारि ।
खरगसेनकौं रायनैं, दिए परगने च्यारि ।। ५५ ।।

चौपई

पोतदार कीनौं निज सोइ, दीनै साथि कारकुन दोइ ।
जाइ परगनें कीनौं काम, करहि अमल तहसीलहि दाम ।। ५६ ।।
जोरि खजाना भेजहि तहां, राइ तथा लोदीखां जहां ।
इहि बिधि बीते मास छ सात, चले समेतसिखरिकी जात ।। ५७ ।।

दोहरा

संघ चलायौ रायजी, दियौ हुकम सुलतान ।
उहां जाइ पूजा करी, फिरि आए निज थान ।। ५८ ।।
आइ राइ पट-भौनमैं, बैठे संध्याकाल ।
बिधिसौं सामाइक करी, लीनौं कर जपमाल ।। ५९ ।।
चौबिहार करि मौन धरि, जपै पंच नवकार ।
उपजी सूल उदरविषैं, हूओ हाहाकार ।। ६० ।।
कही न मुखसौं बात किछु, लही मृत्यु ततकाल ।
गही और थिति जाइ तिनि, ढही देह-दीवाल ।। ६१ ।।

सवैया तेईसा

पुंन संजोग जुरे रथ पाइक, माते मतंग तुरंग तबेले ।
मानि बिभौ अंगयौ सिर भार, कियौ बिसतार परिग्रह ले ले ।।
बंध बढ़ाइ करी थिति पूरन, अंत चले उठि आपु अकेले ।
हारे हमालकी पोटसी डारि कै, और दिवालकी ओट हो खेले ।। ६२ ।।

चौपई

एहि बिधि राइ अचानक मुआ । गांउ गांउ कोलाहल हुआ ।।
खरगसेन सुनि यहु बिरतंत । गयौ भागि घर त्यागि तुरंत ।। ६३ ।।
कीनौं दुखी दरिद्री भेख । लीनौं ऊबट पंथ अदेख ।।
नदी गांउ बन परबत घूमि । आए नगर जौनपुर-भूमि ।। ६४ ।।

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रजनी समै गेह निज आइ । गुरुजन-चरननमैं सिर नाइ ।।
किछु अंतर-धनु हुतौ जु साथ । सो दीनौं माताके हाथ ।। ६५ ।।
एहि बिधि बरस च्यारि चलि गए । बरस अठारहके जब भए ।।
कियौ गवन तब पच्छिम दिसा । संवत सोलह सै छब्बिसा ।। ६६ ।।
आए नगर आगरेमांहि । सुंदरदास पीतिआ पांहि ।।
खरगसेनसौं राखै प्रेम । करै सराफी बेचै हेम ।। ६७ ।।
खरगसेन भी थैली करी । दुहू मिलाइ दामसौं भरी ।।
दोऊ सीर करहिं बेपार । कला निपुन धनवंत उदार ।। ६८ ।।
उभय परस्पर प्रीति गहंत । पिता पुत्र सब लोग कहंत ।।
बरस च्यारि ऐसी बिधि भए । तब मेरठिपुर ब्याहन गए ।। ६९ ।।

छप्पै

सूरदास श्रीमाल ढोर मेरठी कहावै ।
ताकी सुता बियाहि, सेन अर्गलपुर आवै ।।
आइ हाट बैठे कमाइ, कीनी निज संपति ।
चाचीसौं नहिं बनी, लियौ न्यारो घर दंपति ।।
इस बीचि बरस द्वै तीनिमैं, सुंदरदास कलत्रजुत ।
मरि गए त्यागि धन धाम सब, सुता एक, नहिं कोउ सुत ।। ७० ।।

दोहरा

सुता कुमारी जो हुती, सो परनाई सेनि ।
दान मान बहुबिधि दियौ, दीनी कंचन रैंनि ।। ७१ ।।
संपति सुंदरदासकी, जु कछु लिखी मिलि पंच ।
सो सब दीनी बहिनिकौं, सेन न राखी रंच ।। ७२ ।।
तेतीसै संबत समै, गए जौनपुर गाम ।
एक तुरंगम एक रथ, बहु पाइक बहु दाम ।। ७३ ।।
दिन दस बीते जौनपुर, नगरमांहि करि हाट ।
साझी करि बैठे तुरित, कियौ बनजकौ ठाट ।। ७४ ।।
रामदास बनिआ धनपती । जाति अगरबाला सिवमती ।।
सो साझी कीनौं हित मान । प्रीति रीति परतीति मिलान ।। ७५ ।।
करहिं सराफी दोऊ गुनी । बनजहिं मोती मानिक चुनी ।।
सुखसौं काल भली बिधि गमै । सोलहसै पैंतीस समै ।। ७६ ।।

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खरगसेन घर सुत अवतर्‌यौ । खरच्यौ दरब हरस मन धर्‌यौ ।।
दिन दसम पहुच्यौ परलोक । कीना प्रथम पुत्रकौ सोक ।। ७७ ।।
सैंतीसै संबतकी बात । रुहतग गए सतीकी जात ।।
चोरन्ह लूटि लियौ पथमांहि । सर्वस गयौ रह्यौ कछु नांहि ।। ७८ ।।
रहे बस्त्र अरु दंपति-देह । ज्यौं त्यौं करि आए निज गेह ।।
गए हुते मांगनकौं पूत । यहु फल दीनौं सती अऊत ।। ७९ ।।
तऊ न समुझै मिथ्या बात । फिरि मानी उनहीकी जात ।।
प्रगट रूप देखै सब फोक । तऊ न समुझै मूरख लोक ।। ८० ।।
घर आए फिर बैठे हाट । मदनसिंघ चित भए उचाट ।।
माया तजी भई सुख सांति । तीन बरस बीते इस भांति ।। ८१ ।।
संबत सोलहसै इकताल । मदनसिंघनैं कीनौं काल ।।
धर्म कथा फैली सब ठौर । बरस दोइ जब बीते और ।। ८२ ।।
तब सुधि करी सतीकी बात । खरगसेन फिर दीनी जात ।।
संवत सोलहसै तेताल । माघ मास सित पक्ष रसाल ।। ८३ ।।
एकादसी बार रवि-नंद । नखत रोहिनी वृषकौ चंद ।।
रोहिनि त्रितिय चरन अनुसार । खरगसेन-घर सुत अवतार ।। ८४ ।।
दीनौं नाम विक्रमाजीत । गावहिं कामिनि मंगल-गीत ।।
दीजहि दान भयौ अति हर्ष । जनम्यौ पुत्र आठएं वर्ष ।। ८५ ।।
एहि बिधि बीते मास छ सात । चले सु पार्श्वनाथकी जात ।।
कुल कुटुंब सब लीनौ साथ । बिधिसौं पूजे पारसनाथ ।। ८६ ।।
पूजा करि जोरे जुग पानि । आगें बालक राख्यौ आनि ।।
तब कर जोरि पुजारा कहै । "बालक चरन तुम्हारे गहै ।। ८७ ।।
चिरंजीवि कीजै यह बाल । तुम्ह सरनागतके रखपाल ।।
इस बालकपर कीजै दया । अब यहु दास तुम्हारा भया" ।। ८८ ।।
तब सु पुजारा साधै पौन । मिथ्या ध्यान कपटकी मौन ।।
घड़ी एक जब भई बितीत । सीस घुमाइ कहै सुनु मीत ।। ८९ ।।
"सुपिनंतर किछु आयौ मोहि । सो सब बात कहौं मैं तोहि ।।
प्रभु पारस-जिनवरकौ जच्छ । सो मोपै आयौ परतच्छ ।। ९० ।।
तिन यहु बात कही मुझपांहि । इस बालककौं चिंता नांहि ।।
जो प्रभु-पास-जनमकौ गांउ । सो दीजै बालककौ नांउ ।। ९१ ।।

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तौ बालक चिरजीवी होइ । यहु कहि लोप भयौ सुर सोइ ।।"
जब यहु बात पुजारे कही । खरगसेन जिय जानी सही ।। ९२ ।।

दोहरा

हरषित कहै कुटुंब सब, स्वामी पास सुपास ।
दुहुकौ जनम बनारसी, यहु बनारसी-दास ।। ९३ ।।
एहि बिधि धरि बालककौ नांउ । आए पलटि जौनपुर गांउ ।।
सुख समाधिसौं बरतै बाल । संवत सोलह सै अठताल ।। ९४ ।।
पूरब करम उदै संजोग । बालककौं संग्रहनी रोग ।।
उपज्यौ औषध कीनी घनी । तऊ न बिथा जाइ सिसुतनी ।। ९५ ।।
बरस एक दुख देख्यौ बाल । सहज समाधि भई ततकाल ।।
बहुरों बरस एकलौं भला । पंचासै निकसी सीतला ।। ९६ ।।

दोहरा

बिथा सीतला उपसमी, बालक भयौ अरोग ।
खरगसेनके घरि सुता, भई करम-संजोग ।। ९७ ।।
आठ बरसकौ हूओ बाल । विद्या पढ़न गयौ चटसाल ।
गुर पांड़ेसौं विद्या सिखै । अक्खर बांचै लेखा लिखैं ।। ९८ ।।
बरस एक लौं विद्या पढ़ी । दिन दिन अधिक अधिक मति बढ़ी ।
विद्या पढ़ि हूओ बितपन्न । संबत सोलह सै बावन्न ।। ९९ ।।

दोहरा

खरगसेन बनिज रतन, हीरा मानिक लाल ।
इस अंतर नौ बरसकौ, भयौ बनारसि बाल ।। १०० ।।
खैराबाद नगर बसै, तांबी परबत नाम ।
तासु पुत्र कल्यानमल, एक सुता तस धाम ।। १०१ ।।
तासु पुरोहित आइओ, लीनैं नाऊ साथ ।
पत्र लिखत कल्यानकौ, दियौ सेनके हाथ ।। १०२ ।।
करी सगाई पुवकी, कीनौ तिलक लिलाट ।
बरस दोइ उपरांत लिखि, लगन ब्याहकौ ठाट ।। १०३ ।।
भई सगाई बावनें, पर्‌यौ त्रेपनें काल ।
महघा अंन न पाइयै, भयौ जगत बेहाल ।। १०४ ।।

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गयौ काल बीते दिन घने, संबत सोलह सै चौवने ।।
माघ मास सित पख बारसी । चले बिवाहन बानारसी ।। १०५ ।।
करि बिवाह आए निज धाम । दूजी और सुता अभिराम ।।
खरगसेनके घर अवतरी । तिस दिन वृद्धा नानी मरी ।। १०६ ।।

दोहरा

नानी मरन सुता जनम, पुत्रबधू आगौन ।
तीनौं कारज एक दिन, भए एक ही भौन ।। १०७ ।।
यह संसार विडम्बना, देखि प्रगट दुख खेद ।
चतुर चित्त त्यागी भए, मूढ़ न जानहि भेद ।। १०८ ।।
इहि बिधि दोइ मास बीतिया । आयौ दुलिहिनिकौ पीतिया ।।
ताराचंद नाम श्रीमाल । सो ले चल्यौ भतीजी नाल ।। १०९ ।।
खैराबाद नगर सो गयौ । इहां जौनपुर बीतिक भयौ ।।
बिपदा उदै भई इस बीच । पुरहाकिम नौवाब किलीच ।। ११० ।।

दोहरा

तिन पकरे सब जौंहरी, दिए कोठरीमांहि ।
बड़ी बस्तु माँगै कछू, सो तौ इनपै नांहि ।। १११ ।।
एक दिवस तिनि कोप करि, कियौ हुकम उठि भोर ।
बांधि बांधि सब जौंहरी, खड़े किए ज्यौं चोर ।। ११२ ।।
हने कटीले कोररे, कीने मृतक समान ।
दिए छोड़ तिस बार तिन, आए निज निज थान ।। ११३ ।।
आइ सबनि कीनौ मतौ, भागि जाहु तजि भौन ।
निज निज परिगह साथ ले, परै काल-मुख कौन ।। ११४ ।।

चौपई

यहु कहि भिन्न भिन्न सब भए । फूटि फाटिकै चहुंदिसि गए ।।
खरगसेन लै निज परिवार । आए पच्छिम गंगापार ।। ११५ ।।
नगरी साहिजादपुर नांउ । निकट कड़ा मानिकपुर गांउ ।।
आए साहिजादपुर बीच । बरसै मेघ भई अति कीच ।। ११६ ।।
निसा अंधेरी बरसा घनी । आइ सराइ बसे गृह-धनी ।।
खरगसेन सब परिजन साथ । करहिं रुदन ज्यौं दीन अनाथ ।। ११७ ।।

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दोहरा

पुत्र कलत्र सुता जुगल, अरु संपदा अनूप ।
भोग-अंतराई-उदै, भए सकल दुखरूप ।। ११८ ।।

चौपई

इस अवसर तिस पुर थानिया । करमचंद माहुर बानिया ।।
तिन अपनौं घर खाली कियौ । आपु निवास और घर लियौ ।। ११९ ।।
भई बितीत रैंनि इक जाम । टेरै खरगसेनकौ नाम ।।
टेरत बूझत आयौ तहां । खरगसेनजी बैठे जहां ।। १२० ।।
'रामराम' करि बैठ्यौ पास । बोल्यौ तुम साहब मैं दास ।।
चलहु कृपा करि मेरे संग । मैं सेवक तुम चढ़ौ तुरंग ।। १२१ ।।
जथाजोग है डेरा एक । चलिए तहां न कीजै टेक ।।
आए हितसौं तासु निकेत । खरगसेन परिवारसमेत ।। १२२ ।।
बैठे सुखसौं करि विश्राम । देख्यौ अति विचित्र सो धाम ।।
कोरे कलस धरे बहु माट । चादरि सोरि तुलाई खाट ।। १२३ ।।
भरयौ अंनसौं कोठा एक । भख्य पदारथ और अनेक ।।
सकल बस्तु पूरन करि गेह । तिन दीनौं करि बहुत सनेह ।। १२४ ।।
खरगसेन हठ कीनौ महा । चरन पकरि तिन कीनी हहा ।।
अति आग्रह करि दीनौ सर्व । बिनय बहुत कीनी तजि गर्व ।। १२५ ।।

दोहरा

घन बरसै पावस समै, जिन दीनौं निज भौन ।
ताकी महिमाकी कथा, मुखसौं बरनै कौन ।। १२६ ।।

चौपई

खरगसेन तहां सुखसौं रहै । दसा बिचारि कबीसुर कहै ।।
वह दुख दियौ नवाब किलीच । यह सुख साहिजादपुरबीच ।। १२७ ।।
एक दिष्टि बहु अंतर होइ । एक दिष्टि सुख-दुख सम दोइ ।।
जो दुख देखै सो सुख लहै । सुख भुंजै सोई दुख सहै ।। १२८ ।।

दोहरा

सुखमैं मानै मैं सुखी, दुखमैं दुखमय होइ ।
मूढ़ पुरुषकी दिष्टिमैं, दीसै सुख दुख दोइ ।। १२९ ।।

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ग्यानी संपति विपतिमैं, रहै एकसी भांति ।
ज्यौं रवि ऊगत आथवत, तजै न राती कांति ।। १३० ।।
करमचंद माहुर बनिक, खरगसेन श्रीमाल ।
भए मित्र दोऊ पुरुष, रहैं रयनि दिन नाल ।। १३१ ।।
इहि बिधि कीनौ मास दस, साहिजादपुर बास ।
फिर उठि चले प्रयागपुर, बसै त्रिवेणी पास ।। १३२ ।।

चौपई

बसै प्रयाग त्रिवेनी पास । जाकौ नांउ इलाहाबास ।।
तहां दानि वसुधा-पुरहूत । अकबर पातिसाहकौ पूत ।। १३३ ।।
खरगसेन तहां कीनौ गौंन । रोजगार कारन तजि भान ।।
बनारसी बालक घरि रह्यौ । कौड़ी-बेच बनिज तिन गह्यौ ।। १३४ ।।
एक टका द्वै टका कमाइ । काहूकी ना धरै तमाइ ।।
जोरै नफा एकठा करै । लै दादीके आगें धरै ।। १३५ ।।

दोहरा

दादी बांटै सीरनी, लाडू नुकती नित्त ।
प्रथम कमाई पुत्रकी, सती अऊत निमित्त ।। १३६ ।।

चौपई

दादी मानै सती अऊत । जानै तिन दीनौ यह पूत ।।
देख सुपिन करै जब सैन । जागे कहै पितरके बैन ।। १३७ ।।
तासु विचार करै दिन राति । ऐसी मूढ़ जीवकी जाति ।।
कहत न बनै कहै का कोइ । जैसी मति तैसी गति होइ ।। १३८ ।।

दोहरा

मास तीनि औरौं गए, बीते तेरह मास ।
चीठी आई सेनकी, करहु फतेपुर बास ।। १३९ ।।
डोली द्वै भाड़ै करी, कीनैं च्यारि मजूर ।
सहित कुटुंब बनारसी, आए फत्तेपूर ।। १४० ।।

चौपई

फत्तेपुरमैं आए तहाँ । ओसवालके घर हैं जहाँ ।।
बासू साह अध्यातम-जान । बसै बहुत तिन्हकी संतान ।। १४१ ।।

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बासू-पुत्र भगौतीदास । तिन दीनौ तिन्हकौ आवास ।।
तिस मंदिरमैं कीनौ बास । सहित कुटंब बनारसिदास ।। १४२ ।।
सुख समाधिसौं दिन गए, करत सु केलि बिलास ।
चीठी आई बापकी, चले इलाहाबास ।। १४३ ।।
चले प्रयाग बनारसी, रहे फतेपुर लोग ।
पिता-पुत्र दोऊ मिले; आनंदित बिधि-जोग ।। १४४ ।।

चौपई

खरगसेन जौंहरी उदार । करै जबाहरकौ बेपार ।।
दानिसाहिजीकी सरकार । लेवा देई रोक-उधार ।। १४५ ।।
चारि मास बीते इस भांति । कबहूं दुख कबहूं सुख सांति ।।
फिरि आए फत्तेपुर गांउ । सकल कुटंब भयौ इक ठांउ ।। १४६ ।।
मास दोइ बीते इस बीच । सुनी आगरे गयौ किलीच ।।
खरगसेन परिवारसमेत । फिरि आए आपनै निकेत ।। १४७ ।।
जहां तहांसौं सब जौंहरी । प्रगटे जथा गुपत भौंहरी ।।
संवत सोलह सै छप्पनै । लागे सब कारज आपनै ।। १४८ ।।
बरस एकलौं बरती छेम । आए साहिब साहि सलेम ।।
बड़ा साहिजादा जगबंद । अकबर पातिसाहिकौ नंद ।। १४९ ।।
आखेटक कोल्हूबन काज । पातिसाहिकी भई अवाज ।।
हाकिम इहां जौनपुर थान । लघु किलीच नूरम सुलतान ।। ।।१५० ।।
ताहि हुकम अकबरकौ भयौ । सहिजादा कोल्हूबन गयौ ।।
तातैं सो किछु कर तू जेम । कोल्हूबन नहिं जाय सलेम ।। १५१ ।।
एहि बिधि अकबरकौ फुरमान । सीस चढ़ायौ नूरम खान ।।
तब तिन नगर जौनपुर बीच । भयौ गढ़पती ठानी मीच ।। १५२ ।।
जहां तहां रूधी सब बाट । नांउ न चलै गौमती-घाट ।।
पुल दरवाजे दिए कपाट । कीनौ तिन विग्रहकौ ठाठ ।। १५३ ।।
राखे बहु पायक असबार । चहु दिसि बैठे चौकीदार ।।
कोट कंगूरेन्ह राखी नाल । पुरमैं भयौ ऊचलाचाल ।। १५४ ।।
करी बहुत गढ़ संजोवनी । अंन बस्त्र जलकी ढोवनी ।।
जिरह जीन बंदूक अपार । बहु दारू नाना हथियार ।। १५५ ।।
खोलि खजाना खरचै दाम । भयौ आपु सनमुख संग्राम ।।

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प्रजालोग सब ब्याकुल भए । भागे चहू ओर उठि गए ।। १५६ ।।
महा नगरि सो भई उजार । अब आई अब आई धार ।।
सब जौंहरी मिले इक ठौर । नगरमांहि नर रह्यौ न और ।। १५७ ।।
क्या कीजै अब कौन बिचार । मुसकिल भई सहित परिबार ।।
रहे न कुसल न भागे छेम । पकरी सांप छछूंदरि जेम ।। १५८ ।।
तब सब मिलि नूरमके पास । गए जाइ कीनी अरदास ।।
नूरम कहै सुनहु रे साहु । भावै इहां रहौ कै जाहु ।। १५९ ।।
मेरौ मरन बन्यौ है आइ । मैं क्या तुमकौं कहौं उपाइ ।।
तब सब फिरि आए निज धाम । भागहु जो किछु करहि सो राम ।। १६० ।।

दोहरा

आपु आपकौं सब भगे, एकहि एक न साथ ।
कोऊ काहूकी सरन, कोऊ कहूं अनाथ ।। १६१ ।।

चौपई

खरगसेन आए तिस ठांउ । दूलह साहु गए जिस गांउ ।।
लछिमनपुरा गांउके पास । तहां चौधरी लछिमनदास ।। १६२ ।।
तिन लै राखे जंगलमांहि । कीनौं कौल बोल दै बांहि ।।
इहि बिधि बीते दिवस छ सात । सुनी जौनपुरकी कुसलात ।। १६३ ।।
साहि सलेम गोमती तीर । आयौ तब पठयौ इक मीर ।।
लालाबेग मीरकौ नांउ । ह्वै वकील आयौ तिस ठांउ ।। १६४ ।।
नरम गरम कहि ठाढ़ौ भयौ । नूरमकौं लिबाइ लै गयौ ।।
जाइ साहिके डारौ पाइ । निरभै कियौ गुनह बकसाइ ।। १६५ ।।
जब यह बात सुनी इस भांति । तब सबके मन बरती सांति ।।
फिरि आए निज निज घर लोग । निरभै भए गयौ भय-रोग ।। १६६ ।।
खरगसेन अरु दूलह साह । इनहू पकरी घरकी राह ।।
सपरिवार आए निज धाम । लागे आप आपने काम ।। १६७ ।।
इस अवसर बानारसि बाल । भयौ प्रवांन चतुर्दस साल ।।
पंडित देवदत्तके पास । किछु विद्या तिन करी अभ्यास ।। १६८ ।।
पढ़ी ' नाममाला ' सै दोइ । और ' अनेकारथ ' अवलोइ ।।
जोतिस अलंकार लघु कोक । खंड स्फुट सै च्यारि सिलोक ।। १६९ ।।

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विद्या पढ़ि विद्यामैं रमै । सोलह सै सतावने समै ।।
तजि कुल-कान लोककी लाज । भयौ बनारसि आसिखबाज ।। १७० ।।
करै आसिखी धरि मन धीर । दरदबंद ज्यौं सेख फकीर ।।
इकटक देखि ध्यान सो धरै । पिता आपनेकौ धन हरै ।। १७१ ।।
चोरै चूंनी मानिक मनी । आनै पान मिठाई घनी ।।
भेजै पेसकसी हित पास । आपु गरीब कहावै दास ।। १७२ ।।
इस अंतर चौमास बितीत । आई हिमरितु ब्यापी सीत ।।
खरतर अमैधरम उबझाइ । दोइ सिष्यजुत प्रकटे आइ ।। १७३ ।।
भानचंद मुनि चतुर विशेष । रामचंद बालक गृह-भेष ।।
आए जती जौनपुरमांहि । कुल श्रावक सब आवहिं जांहि ।। १७४ ।।
लखि कुल–धरम बनारसि बाल । पिता साथ आयौ पोसाल ।।
भानचंदसौं भयौ सनेह । दिन पोसाल रहै निसि गेह ।। १७५ ।।
भानचंदपै विद्या सिखै । पंचसंधिकी रचना लिखै ।।
पढ़ै सनातर-बिधि अस्तोन । फुट सिलोक बहु बरन कौन ।। १७६ ।।
सामाइक पडिकौना पंथ । छंद कोस स्रुतबोध गरंथ ।।
इत्यादिक विद्या मुखपाठ । पढ़ै सुद्ध साधै गुन आठ ।। १७७ ।।
कबहू आइ सवद उर धरै । कबहू जाइ आसिखी करै ।।
पोथी एक बनाई नई । मित हजार दोहा चौपई ।। १७८ ।।
तामैं नवरस-रचना लिखी । पै बिसेस बरनन आसिखी ।।
ऐसे कुकबि बनारसि भए । मिथ्या ग्रंथ बनाए नए ।। १७९ ।।

दोहरा

कै पढ़ना कै आसिखी, मगन दुहू रसमांही ।
खान-पानकी सुध नहीं, रोजगार किछु नांहि ।। १८० ।।

चौपई

ऐसी दसा बरस द्वै रही । मात पिताकी सीख न गही ।।
करि आसिखी पाठ सब पठे । संबत सोलह सै उनसठे ।। १८१ ।।

दोहरा

भए पंचदस बरसके, तिस ऊपर दस मास ।
चले पाउजा करनकौं, कवि बनारसीदास ।। १८२ ।।

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चढ़ि डोली सेवक लिए, भूषन बसन बनाइ ।।
खैराबाद नगरविषै, सुखसौं पहुचे आइ ।। १८३ ।।

चौपई

मास एक जब भयौ बितीत । पौष मास सित पख रितु सीत ।।
पूरब करम उदै संजोग । आकसमात वातकौ रोग ।। १८४ ।।

दोहरा

भयौ बनारसिदास-तनु, कुष्ठरूप सरबंग ।
हाड़ हाड़ उपजी बिथा, केस रोम भुव-भंग ।। १८५ ।।
बिस्फोटक अगनित भए, हस्त चरन चौरंग ।
कोऊ नर साला ससुर, भोजन करै न संग ।। १८६ ।।
ऐसी असुभ दसा भई, निकट न आवै कोइ ।
सासू और बिवाहिता, करहिं सेव तिय दोइ ।। १८७ ।।
जल-भोजनकी लहि सुध, दैंहि आनि मुखमांहि ।
ओखद लावहिं अंगमैं, नाक मूंदि उठि जांहि ।। १८८ ।।

चौपई

इस अवसर नर नापित कोइ । ओखद-पुरी खबावै सोइ ।।
चने अलूनै भोजन देइ । पैसा टका किछू नहि लेइ ।। १८९ ।।
चारि मास बीते इस भांति । तब किछु बिथा भई उपसांति ।।
मास दोइ औरौ चलि गए । तब बनारसी नीके भए ।। १९० ।।

दोहरा

न्हाइ धोइ ठाढ़े भए, दै नाऊकौं दान ।
हाथ जोड़ि बिनती करी, तू मुझ मित्र समान ।। १९१ ।।
नापित भयौ प्रसंन अति, गयौ आपने धाम ।
दिन दस खैराबादमैं, कियौ और बिसराम ।। १९२ ।।
फिरि आए डोली चढ़े, नगर जौनपुरमांहि ।
सासु ससुर अपनी सुता, गौंने भेजी नांहि ।। १९३ ।।
आइ पिताके पद गहे, मां रोई उर ठोकि ।
जैसे चिरी कुरीजकी, त्यौं सुत-दसा बिलोकि ।। १९४ ।।
खरगसेन लज्जित भए, कुबचन कहे अनेक ।
रोए बहुत बनारसी, रहे चकित छिन एक ।। १९५ ।।

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दिन दस बीस परे दुखी, बहुरि गए पोसाल ।
कै पढ़ना कै आसिखी, पकरी पहिली चाल ।। १९६ ।।

चौपई

मासि चारि ऐसी बिधि भए । खरगसेन पटनै उठि गए ।।
फिरि बनारसी खैरावाद । आए मुख लज्जित सबिषाद ।। १९७ ।।
मास एक फिरि दूजी बार । घरमैं रहें न गए बजार ।।
फिरि उठि चले नारि लै संग । एक सुडोली एक तुरंग ।। १९८ ।।
आए नगर जौनपुर फेरि । कुल कुटंब सब बैठे घेरि ।।
गुरुजन लोग दैंहि उपदेस । आसिखवाज सुनें दरवेस ।। १९९ ।।
बहुत पढ़ैं बांभन अरु भाट । बनिकपुत्र तौ बैठे हाट ।।
बहुत पढ़ै सो माँगै भीख । मानहु पूत बड़ेकी सीख ।। २०० ।।

दोहरा

इत्यादिक स्वारथ बचन, कहे सबनि बहु भांति ।
मानै नहीं बनारसी, रह्यौ सहज-रस मांति ।। २०१ ।।

चौपई

फिरि पोसाल भानपै पढ़ै, आसिखबाजी दिन दिन बढ़ै ।
काऊ कह्यौ न मानै कोइ, जैसी गति तैसी मति होइ ।। २०२ ।।
कर्माधीन बनारसि रमै, आयौ संवत साठा सम ।
साठै संबत एती बात, भई जु कछू कहौं विख्यात ।। २०३ ।।
साठै करि पटनेंसौं गौन । खरगसेन आए निज भौन ।।
साठै ब्याही बेटी बड़ी । बितरी पहिली संपति गड़ी ।। २०४ ।।
बनारसीकैं बेटी हुई । दिवस छ-सातमांहि सो मुई ।।
जहमति परे बनारसिदास । कीनैं लंघन बीस उपास ।। २०५ ।।
लागी छुधा पुकारै सोइ । गुरुजन पथ्य देइ नहि कोइ ।।
तब मांगै देखनकौं रोइ । आध सेरकी पूरी दोइ ।। २०६ ।।
खाट हेठ ल धरी दुराइ । सो बनारसी भखी चुराइ ।।
वाही पथसौं नीकौ भयौ । देख्यौ लोगनि कौतुक नयौ ।। २०७ ।।
साठै संबत करि दिढ़ हियौ । खरगसेन इक सौदा लियौ ।।
तामैं भए सौगुने दाम । चहल पहल हूई निज धाम ।। २०८ ।।

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यह साठे संबतकी कथा । ज्यौं देखी मैं बरनी तथा ।।
समै मै उनसठे सावन बीच । कोऊ संन्यासी नर नीच ।। २०९ ।।
आइ मिल्यौ सो आकसमात । कही बनारसिसौं तिन बात ।।
एक मंत्र है मेरे पास । सो बिधिरूप जपै जो दास ।। २१० ।।
बरस एक लौं साधै नित्त । दिढ़ प्रतीति आनै निज चित्त ।।
जपै बैठि छरछोभी मांहि । भेद न भाखै किस ही पांहि ।। २११ ।।
पूरन होइ मंत्र जिस बार । तिसके फलका कहूं बिचार ।।
प्रात समय आवै गृहद्वार । पावै एक पड़्या दीनार ।। २१२ ।।
बरस एक लौं पावै सोइ । फिरि साधै फिरि ऐसी होइ ।।
यह सब बात बनारसि सुनी । जान्या महापुरुष है गुनी ।। २१३ ।।
पकरे पाइ लोभके लिए । मांगै मंत्र बीनती किए ।।
तब तिन दीनौं मंत्र सिखाइ । अक्खर कागदमांहि लिखाइ ।। २१४ ।।
वह प्रदेस उठि गयौ स्वतंत्र । सठ बनारसी साधै मंत्र ।।
बरस एक लौं कीनौ खेद । दीनौं नांहि औरकौं भेद ।। २१५ ।।
बरस एक जब पूरा भया । तब बनारसी द्वारै गया ।।
नीची दिष्टि बिलोकै धरा । कहुं दीनार न पावै परा ।। २१६ ।।
फिरि दूजै दिन आयौ द्वार । सुपने नहि देखै दीनार ।।
ब्याकुल भयौ लोभके काज । चिंता बढ़ी न भावै नाज ।। २१७ ।।
कही भानसौं मनकी दुधा । तिनि जब कही बात यह मुधा ।।
तब बनारसी जानी सही । चिंता गई छुधा लहलही ।। २१८ ।।
जोगी एक मिल्यौ तिस आइ । बानारसी दियौ भौंदाइ ।।
दीनी एक संखोली हाथ । पूजाकी सामग्री साथ ।। २१९ ।।
कहै सदासिव मूरति एह । पूजै सो पावै सिव-गेह ।।
तब बनारसी सीस चढ़ाइ । लीनी नित पूजै मन लाइ ।। २२० ।।
ठानि सनानि भगति चित धरै । अष्टप्रकारी पूजा करै ।।
सिव सिव नाम जपै सौ बार । आठ अधिक मन हरख अपार ।। २२१ ।।

बोहरा

पूजै तब भोजन करै, अनपूजै पछिताइ ।
तासु दंड अगिले दिवस, रूखा भोजन खाइ ।। २२२ ।।
ऐसी बिधि बहु दिन गए, करत गुपत शिवपूज ।

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आयौ संबत इकसठा, चैत मास सित दूज ।। २२३ ।।
साहिब साहि सलीमकौ, हीरानंद मुकीम ।
ओसवाल कुल जौंहरी, बनिक वित्तकी सीम ।। २२४ ।।
तिनि प्रयागपुर नगरसौं, कीनौ उद्‌म सार ।
संघ चलायौ सिखिरकौं, उतर्‌यौ गंगापार ।। २२५ ।।
ठौर ठौर पत्री दई, भई खबर जिततित्त ।
चीठी आई सेनकौं, आवहु जात-निमित्त ।। २२६ ।।
खरगसेन तब उठि चले, ह्वै तुरंग असबार ।
ज'इ नंदजीकौं मिले तजि कुटुंब घरबार ।। २२७ ।।

चौपई

खरगसेन जात्राकौं गए । बानारसी निरंकुस भए ।।
करैं कलह मातासौं नित्त । पारस-जिनकी जात निमित्त ।। २२८ ।।
दही दूध घृत चावल चने । तेल तंबोल पहुप अनगने ।।
इतनी बस्तु तजी ततकाल । पन लीनौ कीनौ हठ बाल ।। २२९ ।।

दोहरा

चैत महीने पन लियौ, बीते मास छ सात ।
आई पून्यौ कातिकी, चलै लोग सब जात ।। २३० ।।
चले सिवमती न्हानकौं, जैनी पूजन पास ।
तिन्हके साथ बनारसी, चले बनारसिदास ।। २३१ ।।
कासी नगरीमैं गए, प्रथम नहाए गंग ।
पूजा पास सुपासकी, कीनी धरि मन रंग ।। २३२ ।।
जे जे पनकी बस्तु सब, ते ते मोल मंगाइ ।
नेवज ज्यौं आगें धरै, पूजै प्रभुके पाइ ।। २३३ ।।
दिन दस रहे बनारसी, नगर बनारसमांहि ।
पूजा कारन द्योहरे, नित प्रभात उठि जांहि ।। २३४ ।।
एहि बिधि पूजा पासकी, कीनी भगतिसमेत ।
फिरि आए घर आपनै, लिएं संखोली सेत ।। २३५ ।।
पूजा संख महेसकी, करकै तौ किछु खांहि ।
देस विदेस इहां उहां, कबहूं भूली नांहि ।। २३६ ।।

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सोरठा

संखरूप सिवदेव, महा संख बानारसी ।
दोऊ मिले अबेव, साहिब सेवक एकसे ।। २३७ ।।

दोहरा

इस ही बीचि उरे परे, खरगसेनके भौन ।
भयौ एक अलपायु सुत, ताहि बखानै कौन ।। २३८ ।।

चौपई

संबत सोलह स इकसठे । आए लोग संघसौं नठे ।।
केई उबरे केई मुए । केई महा जहमती हुए ।। २३९ ।।
खरगसेन पटनेंमौं आइ । जहमति परे महा दुख पाइ ।।
उपजी बिथा उदरम राग । फिरि उपसमी आउबल-जोग ।। २४० ।।
संघ साथ आए निज धाम । नंद जौनपुर कियौ मुकाम ।।
खरगसेन दुख पायौ बाट । घरम आइ परे फिरि खाट ।। २४१ ।।
हीरानंद लोग-मनुहारि । रहे जौनपुरमैं दिन चारि ।।
पंचम दिवस पारके बाग । छट्ठे दिन उठि चले प्रयाग ।। २४२ ।।

दोहरा

संघ फूटि चहुं दिसि गयौ, आप आपकौ होइ ।
नदी नांव संजोग ज्यौं, बिछुरि मिलै नहिं कोइ ।। २४३ ।।

चौपई

इहि बिधि दिवस कैकु चलि गए । खरगसेनजी नीके भए ।।
सुख समाधि बीते दिन घनें । बीचि बीचि दुख जांहि न गनें ।। २४४ ।।

दोहरा

इस अवसर सुत अवतर्‌यौ, बानारसिके गेह ।
भव पूरन करि मरि गयौ, तजि दुल्लभ नरदेह ।। २४५ ।।

चौपई

संबत सोलह स बासठा । आयौ कातिक पावस नठा ।।
छत्रपति अकबर साहि जलाल । नगर आगरे कीनौं काल ।। २४६ ।।
आई खबर जौनपुरमांह । प्रजा अनाथ भई बिनु नाह ।।
पुरजन लोग भए भयभीत । हिरद व्याकुलता मुख पीत ।। २४७ ।।

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दोहरा

अकसमात बानारसी, सुनि अकबरकौ काल ।
सीढ़ी परि बठ्यौ हुतो, भयौ भरम चित चाल ।। २४८ ।।
आइ तवाला गिरि पर्‌यौ, सक्यौ न आँख राखि ।
फूटि भाल लोहू चल्यौ, कह्यौ 'देव' मुख-भाखि ।। २४९ ।।
लगी चोट पाखानकी, भयौ गृहांगन लाल ।
'हाइ हाइ' सब करि उठे, मात तात बेहाल ।। २५० ।।

चौपई

गोद उठाय माइनैं लियौ । अंबर जारि घाउमैं दियौ ।।
खाट बिछाइ सुबायौ बाल । माता रुदन करै असराल ।। २५१ ।।
इस ही बीच नगरमैं सोर । भयौ उदंगल चारिहु ओर ।।
घर घर दर दर दिए कपाट । हटवानी नहिं बैठे हाट ।। २५२ ।।
भले वस्त्र अरु भूसन भले । ते सब गाड़े धरती तले ।।
हंडवाई गाड़ी कहुं और । नगदी माल निभरमी ठौर ।। २५३ ।।
घर घर सबनि बिसाहे सस्त्र । लोगन्ह पहिरे मोटे बस्त्र ।।
ओढ़े कंबल अथवा खेस । नारिन्ह पहिरे मोटे बेस ।। २५४ ।।
ऊंच नीच कोउ न पहिचान । धनी दरिद्री भए समान ।।
चोरि धारि दीसै कहुं नांहि । यौं ही अपभय लोग डरांहि ।। २५५ ।।

दोहरा

धूम धाम दिन दस रही, बहुरौ बरती सांति ।
चीठी आई सबनिक, समाचार इस भांति ।। २५६ ।।
प्रथम पातिसाही करी, बावन बरस जलाल ।
अब सोलहसै बासठे, कातिक हूओ काल ।। २५७ ।।
अकबरकौ नंदन बड़ौ, साहिब साहि सलेम ।
नगर आगरेमैं तखत, बैठौ अकबर जेम ।। २५८ ।।
नांउ धरायौ नूरदीं, जहांगीर सुलतान ।
फिरी दुहाई मुलकमैं, बरती जहं तहं आन ।। २५९ ।।
इहि बिधि चीठीमैं लिखी, आई घर घर बार ।
फिरी दुहाई जौनपुर, भयौ सु जयजयकार ।। २६० ।।

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चौपई

खरगसेनके घर आनंद । मंगल भयौ गयौ दुख-दंद ।।
बानारसी कियौ असनान । कीजै उत्सव दीजै दान ।। २६१ ।।
एक दिवस बानारसिदास । एकाकी ऊपर आवास ।।
बैठ्यौ मनमैं चिंतै एम । मैं सिव-पूजा कीनी केम ।। २६२ ।।
जब मैं गिरयौ परयौ मुरछाइ । तब सिव किछू न करी सहाइ ।।
यहु बिचारि सिव-पूजा तजी । लखी प्रगट सेवामैं कजी ।। २६३ ।।
तिस दिनसौं पूजा न सुहाइ । सिव-संखोली धरी उठाइ ।।
एक दिवस मित्रन्हके साथ । नौकृत पोथी लीनी हाथ ।। २६४ ।।
नदी गोमतीके बिच आइ । पुलके ऊपरि बैठे जाइ ।।
बांचे सब पोथीके बोल । तब मनमैं यहु उठी कलोल ।। २६५ ।।
एक झूठ जो बोलै कोइ । नरक जाइ दुख देखै सोइ ।।
मैं तो कलपित बचन अनेक । कहे झूठ सब साचु न एक ।। २६६ ।।
कैसैं बनै हमारी बात । भई बुद्धि यह आकसमात ।।
यहु कहि देखन लाग्यौ नदी । पोथी डार दई ज्यौं रदी ।। २६७ ।।
हाइ हाइ करि बोले मीत । नदी अथाह महाभयभीत ।।
तामैं फैलि गए सब पत्र । फिरि कहु कौन करै एकत्र ।। २६८ ।।
धरी द्रक पछितानैं मित्र । कहैं कर्मकी चाल विचित्र ।।
यहु कहिकैं सब न्यारे भए । बनारसी आपुन घर गए ।। २६९ ।।
खरगसेन सुनि यहु बिरतंत । हूए मनमैं हरषितवंत ।
सुतके मन ऐसी मति जगै । घरकी नांउ रही-सी लगै ।। २७० ।।

दोहरा

तिस दिनसौं बानारसी, करै धरमकी चाह ।
तजी आसिखी फासिखी, पकरी कुलकी राह ।। २७१ ।।
कहैं दोष कोउ न तजै, तजै अवस्था पाइ ।
जैसैं बालककी दसा, तरुन भए मिटि जाइ ।। २७२ ।।
उदै होत सुभ करमके, भई असुभकी हानि ।
तातैं तुरित बनारसी, गही धरमकी बानि ।। २७३ ।।

चौपई

नित उठि प्रात जाइ जिनभौन । दरसनु बिनु न करै दंतौन ।।
चौदह नेम बिरति उच्चरै । सामाइक पड़िकौना करै ।। २७४ ।।

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हरी जाति राखी परवांन । जावजीव बैंगन-पचखान ।।
पूजाबिधि साधै दिन आठ । पढ़ै बीनती पद मुख-पाठ ।। २७५ ।।

दोहरा

इहि बिधि जैनधरम कथा, कहै सुनै दिन रात ।
होनहार कोउ न लखै, अलख जीवकी जात ।। २७६ ।।
तब अपजसी बनारसी, अब जस भयौ विख्यात ।
आयौ संबत चौसठा, कहौं तहांकी बात ।। २७७ ।।
खरगसेन श्रीमालकैं, हुती सुता द्वै ठौर ।
एक बियाही जौनपुर, दुतिय कुमारी और ।। २७८ ।।
सोऊ ब्याही चौसठे, संबत फागुन मास ।
गई पाडलीपुरविषैं, करि चितादुखनास ।। २७९ ।।
बानारसिके दूसरौ, भयौ और सुत कीर ।
दिवस कैकुमैं उड़ि गयौ, तजि पिंजरा सरीर ।। २८० ।।

चौपई

कबहूं दुख कबहूं सुख सांति । तीनि बरस बीते इस भांति ।।
लच्छन भले पुत्रके लखे । खरगसेन मनमांहि हरखे ।। २८१ ।।
संबत सोलह सै सतसठा । घरकौ माल कियौ एकठा ।।
खुला जवाहर और जड़ाउ । कागदमांहि लिख्यौ सब भाउ ।। २८२ ।।
द्वै पहुची द्वै मुद्रा बनी । चौबिस मानिक चौतिस मनी ।।
नौ नीले पन्ने दस-दून । चारि गांठि चूंनी परचून ।। २८३ ।।
एती बस्तु जवाहररूप । घृत मन बीस तेल द्वै कूप ।।
लिए जौनपुर होइ दुकूल । मुद्रा द्वै सत लागी मूल ।। २८४ ।।
कछु घरके कछु परके दाम । रोक उधार चलायौ काम ।।
जब सब सौंज भई तैयार । खरगसेन तब कियौ बिचार ।। २८५ ।।
सुत बनारसी लियौ बुलाय । तासौं बात कही समुझाय ।।
लेहु साथ यहु सौंज समस्त । जाइ आगरे बेचहु बस्त ।। २८६ ।।
अब गृहभार कंध तुम लेहु । सब कुटंबकौं रोटी देहु ।।
यहु कहि तिलक कियौ निज हाथ । सब सामग्री दीनी साथ ।। २८७ ।।

दोहरा

गाड़ी भार लदाइकै, रतन जतनसौं पास ।
राखे निज कच्छाविषैं, चले बनारसिदास ।। २८८ ।।

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मिली साथ गाड़ी बहुत, पांच कोस नित जांहि ।
क्रम क्रम पंथ उलंघकरि, गए इटाएमांहि ।। २८९ ।।
नगर इटाएके निकट, करि गाड़िन्हकौ घेर ।
उतरे लोग उजारमैं, हूई संध्या-बेर ।। २९० ।।
घन घमंडि आयौ बहुत, बरसन लाग्यौ मेह ।
भाजन लागे लोग सब, कहां पाइए गेह ।। २९१ ।।
सौरि उठाइ बनारसी, भए पयादे पाउ ।
आए बीचि सराइमैं, उतरे द्वै उंबराउ ।। २९२ ।।
भई भीर बाजारमैं, खाली कोउ न हाट ।
कहूं ठौर नहिं पाइए, घर घर दिए कपाट ।। २९३ ।।
फिरत फिरत फावा भए, बैठन कहै न कोइ ।
तलै कीचसौं पग भरे, ऊपर बरसै तोइ ।। २९४ ।।
अंधकार रजनी समै, हिम रितु अगहन मास ।
नारि एक बैठन कह्यौ, पुरुष उठ्यौ लै बांस ।। २९५ ।।
तिनि उठाइ दीनैं बहुरि, आए गोपुर पार ।
तहां झौंपरी तनकसी, बैठे चौकीदार ।। २९६ ।।
आए तहां बनारसी, अरु श्रावक द्वै साथ ।
ते बूझैं तुम कौन हौ, दुःखित दीन अनाथ ।।२९७ ।।
तिनसौं कहै बनारसी, हम व्यौपारी लोग ।
बिना ठौर व्याकुल भए, फिरैं करम संजोग ।। २९८ ।।

चौपई

तब तिनक चित उपजी दया । कहैं इहां बैठौ करि मया ।।
हम सकार अपने घर जांहि । तुम निसि बसौ झौंपरी मांहि ।। २९९ ।।
औरौं सुनौ हमारी बात । सरियति खबरि भएं परभात ।।
बिनु तहकीक जान नहि देहि । तब बकसीस देहु सो लेहि ।। ३०० ।।
मानी बात बनारसि ताम । बैठे तहं पायौ विश्राम ।।
जल मंगाइकै धोए पाउ । भीजे बस्त्रन्ह दीनी बाउ ।। ३०१ ।।
त्रिन बिछाइ सोए तिस ठौर । पुरुष एक जोरावर और ।।
आयौ कहै इहां तुम कौन । यह झौंपरी हमारौ भौन ।। ३०२ ।।
सैन करौं मैं खाट बिछाइ । तुम किस ठाहर उतरे आइ ।।
कै तौ तुम अब ही उठि जाहु । कै तौ मेरी चाबुक खाहु ।। ३०३ ।।

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तब बनारसी ह्वै हलबले । बरसत मेहु बहुरि उठि चले ।।
उनि दयाल होइ पकरी बांह । फिरि बैठाए छायामांह ।। ३०४ ।।
दीनौ एक पुरानो टाट । ऊपर आनि बिछाई खाट ।।
कहै टाटपर कीजै सैन । मुझे खाट बिनु परै न चैन ।। ३०५ ।।
'एवमस्तु' बानारसि कहै । जैसी जाहि परै सो सहै ।।
जैसा कातै तैसा बुनै । जैसा बोवै तैसा लुनै ।। ३०६ ।।
पुरुष खाटपर सोया भले । तीनौ जनें खाटके तले ।।
सोए रजनी भई बितीत । ओढ़ी सौरि न ब्यापी सीत ।। ३०७ ।।
भयौ प्रात आए फिरि तहां । गाड़ी सब उतरी ही जहां ।।
बरसा गई भई सुख सांति । फिरि उठि चले नित्यकी भांति ।। ३०८ ।।
आए नगर आगरे बीच । तिस दिन फिरि बरसा अरु कीच ।।
कपरा तेल घीउ धरि पार । आपु छरे आए उर पार ।। ३०९ ।।
मन चिंतवै बनारसिदास । किस दिसि जांहि कहां किस पास ।।
सोंचि सोचि यह कीनौ ठीक । मोतीकटला कियौ रफीक ।। ३१० ।।
तहां चांपसीके घर पास । लघु बहनेऊ बंदीदास ।।
तिसके डेरै जाइ तुरंत । सुनिए 'भला सगा अरु संत' ।। ३११ ।।
यह बिचारि आए तिस पांहि । बहनेऊके डेरेमांहि ।।
हितसौं बूझै बंदीदास । कपरा घीउ तेल किस पास ।। ३१२ ।।
तब बनारसी बोलै खरा । उधरनकी कोठीमौं धरा ।।
दिवस कैकु जब बीते और । डेरा जुदा लिया इक ठौर ।। ३१३ ।।
पट-गठरी राखी तिसमांहि । नित्य नखासे आवहि जांहि ।।
बस्त्र बेचि जब लेखा किया । ब्याज-मूर दै टोटा दिया ।। ३१४ ।।
एक दिवस बानारसिदास । गए पार उधरनके पास ।।
बेचा घीऊ तेल सब झारि । बढ़ती नफा रुपैया च्यारि ।। ३१५ ।।
हुंडी आई दीनैं दाम । बात उहांकी जानै राम ।।
बेंचि खोंचि आए उर पार । भए जबाहर बेंचनहार ।। ३१६ ।।
देहिं ताहि जो मांगै कोइ । साधु कुसाधु न देखै टोइ ।।
कोऊ बस्तु कहूं लै जाइ । कोऊ लेइ गिरौं धरि खाइ ।। ३१७ ।।
नगर आगरेकौ ब्यौपार । मूल न जानै मूढ़ गंवार ।।
आयौ उदै असुभकौ जोर । घटती होत चली चहु ओर ।। ३१८ ।।

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नारे मांहि इजारके, बंध्यौ हुतौ दुल म्यान ।
नारा टूटयौ गिरि परयौ, भयौ प्रथम यह ग्यान ।। ३१९ ।।
खुलौ जबाहर जो हुतौ, सो सब थौ उसमांहि ।
लगी चोट गुपती सही, कही न किस ही पांहि ।। ३२० ।।
मानिक नारेके पले, बांध्यौ साटि उचाटि ।
धरी इजार अलंगनी, मूसा लै गयौ काटि ।। ३२१ ।।
पहुंची दोइ जड़ाउकी, बैंची गाहकपांहि ।
दाम करोरी लेइ रह्यौ, परि देवाले मांहि ।। ३२२ ।।
मुद्रा एक जड़ाउकी, ऐसैं डारी खोइ ।
गांठि देत खाली परी, गिरी न पाई सोइ ।। ३२३ ।।
रेज परेजी वस्तु कछु, बुगचा बागे दोइ ।
हुंडवाई घरमैं रही, और बिसाति न कोइ ।। ३२४ ।।

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इहि बिधि उदै भयौ जब पाप । हलहलाइकै आई ताप ।।
तब बनारसी जहमति परे । लंघन दस निकोररे करे ।। ३२५ ।।
फिर पथ लीनौं नीके भए । मास एक बाजार न गए ।।
खरगसेनकी चीठी घनी । आवहिं पै न देइ आपनी ।। ३२६ ।।

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उत्तमचंद जवाहरी, दूलहकौ लघु पूत ।
सो बनारसीका बड़ा, बहनेऊ अरिभूत ।। ३२७ ।।
तिनि अपने घरकौं दिए, समाचार लिखि लेख ।
पूंजी खोइ बनारसी, भए भिखारी मेख ।। ३२८ ।।
उहां जौनपुरमैं सुनी, खरगसेन यह बात ।
हाइ हाइ करि आइ घर, कियौ बहुत उतपात ।। ३२९ ।।
कलह करी निज नारिसौं, कही बात दुख रोइ ।
हम तौ प्रथम कही हुती, सुत आवै घर खोइ ।। ३३० ।।
कहा हमारा सब थया, भया भिखारी पूत ।
पूंजी खोई बेहया, गया बनजका सूत ।। ३३१ ।।

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भए निरास उसास भरि, करि घरमैं बकबाद ।
सुत बनारसीकी बहू, पठई खैराबाद ।। ३३२ ।।
ऐसी बीती जौंनपुर, इहां आगरेमांहि ।
घरकी बस्तु बनारसी, बेंचि बेंचि सब खांहि ।। ३३३ ।।
लटा कुटा जो किछु हुतौ, सो सब खायौ झारि ।
हंडवाई खाई सकल, रहे टका द्वै चारि ।। ३३४ ।।
तब घरमैं बैठे रहैं, जांहि न हाट बाजार ।
मधुमालति मिरगावती, पौथी दोइ उदार ।। ३३५ ।।
ते बांचहिं रजनीसमै, आवहिं नर दस बीस ।
गावहिं अरु बातैं करहिं, नित उठि देंहि असीस ।। ३३६ ।।
सो सामा घरमैं नहीं, जो प्रभात उठि खाइ ।
एक कचौरीबाल नर, कथा सुनै नित आइ ।। ३३७ ।।
वाकी हाट उधार करि, लेंहि कचौरी सेर ।
यह प्रासुक भोजन करहिं, नित उठि सांझ सबेर ।। ३३८ ।।
कबहू आवहिं हाटमंहि, कबहू डेरामांहि ।
दसा न काहूसौं कहैं, करज कचौरी खांहि ।। ३३९ ।।
एक दिवस बानारसी, समौ पाइ एकंत ।
कहै कचौरीबालसौं, गुपत गेह-बिरतंत ।। ३४० ।।
तुम उधार दीनौ बहुत, आगै अब जिनि देहु ।
मेरे पास किछू नहीं, दाम कहांसौं लेहु ।। ३४१ ।।
कहै कचौरीबाल नर, बीस रुपया खाहु ।
तुमसौं कोउ न कछु कहै, जहं भावै तहं जाहु ।। ३४२ ।।
तब चुप भयौ बनारसी, कोउ न जानै बात ।
कथा कहै बैठौ रहै, बीते मास छ-सात ।। ३४३ ।।
कहौं एक दिनकी कथा, तांबी ताराचंद ।
ससुर बनारसिदासकौ, परबतकौ फरजंद ।। ३४४ ।।
आयौ रज़नीके समै, बानारसिके भौन ।
जब लौं सब बैठे रहे, तब लौं पकरी मौन ।। ३४५ ।।
जब सब लोग बिदा भए, गए आपने गेह ।
तब बनारसीसौं कियौ, ताराचंद सनेह ।। ३४६ ।।
करि सनेह बिनती करी, तुम नेउते परभात ।
कालि उहाँ भोजन करौ, आवस्सिक यह बात ।। ३४७ ।।

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यह कहि निसि अपने घर गयौ । फिरि आयौ प्रभात जब भयौ ।।
कहै बनारसिसौं तब सोइ । उहां प्रभात रसोई होइ ।। ३४८ ।।
तातैं अब चलिए इस बार । भोजन करि आवहु बाजार ।।
ताराचंद कियौ छल एह । बानारसी गयौ तिस गेह ।। ३४९ ।।
भेज्यौ एक आदमी कोइ । लटा कुटा ल आयौ सोइ ।।
घरका भाड़ा दिया चुकाइ । पकरे बानारसिके पाइ ।। ३५० ।।
कहै बिनैसौं तारा साहु । इस घर रहौ उहां जिन जाहु ।।
हठ करि राखे डेरामांहि । तहां बनारसि रोटी खांहि ।। ३५१ ।।
इहि बिधि मास दोइ जब गए । धरमदासके साझी भए ।।
जसू अमरसी भाई दोइ । ओसवाल दिलवाली सोइ ।। ३५२ ।।
करहिं जवाहर-बनज बहूत । धरमदास लघु बंधु कपूत ।।
कुबिसन करै कुसंगति जाइ । खोवै दाम अमल बहु खाइ ।। ३५३ ।।
यह लखि कियौ सीरकौ संच । दी पूंजी मुद्रा सै पंच ।।
धरमदास बानारसि यार । दोऊ सीर करहिं ब्यौपार ।। ३५४ ।।
दोऊ फिरैं आगरे मांझ । करहिं गस्त घर आवहिं सांझ ।।
ल्यावहिं चूंनी मानिक मनी । बेंचहिं बहुरि खरीदहिं घनी ।। ३५५ ।।
लिखहिं रोजनामा खतिआइ । नामी भए लोग पतिआइ ।।
बेंचहिं लेंहिं चलावहिं काम । दिए कचौरीवाले दाम ।। ३५६ ।।
भए रुपैया चौदह ठीक । सब चुकाइ दीनै तहकीक ।।
तीनि बार करि दीनौं माल । हरषित कियौ कचौरीबाल ।। ३५७ ।।

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बरस दोइ साझी रहे, फिर मन भयौ विषाद ।
तब बनारसीकी चली, मनसा खैराबाद ।। ३५८ ।।
एक दिवस बानारसी, गयौ साहुके धाम ।
कहै चलाऊ हम भए, लेहु आपने दाम ।। ३५९ ।।

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जसू साह तब दियौ जुआब । बेचहु थैलीकौ असबाब ।।
जब एकठे हौंहि सब थोक । हमकौं दाम देहु तब रोक ।। ३६० ।।
तब बनारसी बेची बस्त । दाम एकठे किए समस्त ।।
गनि दीनै मुद्रा सै पंच । बाकी कछू न राखी रंच ।। ३६१ ।।

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बरस दोइमैं दोइ सै, अधिके किए कमाइ ।
बेची वस्तु बजारमैं, बढ़ता गयौ समाइ ।। ३६२ ।।
सोलह सै सत्तरि समै, लेखा कियौ अचूक ।
न्यारे भए बनारसी, करि साझा ह्वै टूक ।। ३६३ ।।

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जो पाया सो खाया सर्व । बाकी कछू न बांच्या दर्व ।।
करी मसक्कति गई अकाथ । कौड़ी एक न लागी हाथ ।। ३६४ ।।
निकसी घौंघी सागर मथा । भई हींगवालेकी कथा ।।
लेखा किया रूखतल बैठि । पूंजी गई गांड़िमैं पैठि ।। ३६५ ।।
सो बनारसीकी गति भई । फिरि आई दरिद्रता नई ।।
बरस डेढ़ लौं नाचे भले । ह्वै खाली घरकौं उठि चले ।। ३६६ ।।
एक दिवस फिरि आए हाट । घरसौं चले गलीकी बाट ।।
सहज दिष्टि कीनी जब नीच । गठरी एक परी पथ बीच ।। ३६७ ।।
सो बनारसी लई उठाइ । अपने डेरे खोली आइ ।।
मौती आठ और किछु नांहि । देखत खुसी भए मनमांहि ।। ३६८ ।।
ताइत एक गढ़ायौ नयौ । मोती मेले संपुट दयौ ।।
बांध्यौ कटि कीनौ बहु यत्न । जनु पायौ चिंतामनि रत्न ।। ३६९ ।।
अंतरधनु राख्यौ निज पास । पूरब चले बनारसिदास ।।
चले चले आए तिस ठांउ । खरावाद नाम जहां गांउ ।। ३७० ।।
कल्ला साहु ससुरके धाम । संध्या आइ कियौ विश्राम ।।
रजनी बनिता पूछै बात । कहौ आगरे की कुसलात ।। ३७१ ।।
कहै बनारसि माया-बैन । बनिता कहै झूठ सब फैन ।।
तब बनारसी सांची कही । मेरे पास कछू नहिं सही ।। ३७२ ।।
जो कछु दाम कमाए नए । खरच खाइ फिरि खाली भए ।
नारी कहै सुनौ हो कंत । दुख सुखकौ दाता भगबंत ।। ३७३ ।।

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समौ पाइकै दुख भयौ, समौ पाइ सुख होइ ।
होनहार सो ह्वै रहै, पाप पुन्न फल दोइ ।। ३७४ ।।

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कहत सुनत अगंलपुर-बात । रजनी गई भयौ परभात ।।
लहि एकंत कंतके पानि । बीस रुपैया दीए आनि ।। ३७५ ।।
ए मैं जोरि धरे थे दाम । आए आज तुम्हारे काम ।।
साहिब चिंत न कीज कोइ । पुरुष जिए तो सब कछु होइ ।। ३७६ ।।
यह कहि नारि गई मां पास । गुपत बात कीनी परगास ।।
माता काहूसौं जिनि कहौ । निज पुत्रीकी लज्जा बहौ ।। ३७७ ।।

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थोरे दिनमैं लेहु सुधि, तो तुम मा मैं धीय ।
नाहीं तौ दिन कैकुमैं, निकसि जाइगौ पीय ।। ३७८ ।।

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ऐसा पुरुष लजालू बड़ा । बात न कहै जात है गड़ा ।।
कहै माइ जिनि होइ उदास । ढ्वै सै मुद्रा मेरे पास ।। ३७९ ।।
गुपत देउं तेरे करमांहि ।'जो वै बहुरि आगरे जांहि ।।
पुत्री कहै धन्य तू माइ । मैं उनकौं निसि बूझा जाइ ।। ३८० ।।
रजनी समै मधुर मुख भास । बनिता कहै बनारसि पास ।।
कंत तुम्हारौ कहा बिचार । इहां रहौ कै करौ बिहार ।। ३८१ ।।
बानारसी कहै तियपांहि । हम तू साथ जौनपुर जांहि ।।
बनिता कहै सुनहु पिय बात । उहां महा बिपदा उतपात ।। ३८२ ।।
तुम फिर जाहु आगरेमांहि । तुमकौं और ठौर कहुं नांहि ।।
बानारसी कहै सुन तिया । बिनु धन मानुषका धिग जिया ।। ३८३ ।।
दे धीरज फिरि बोलै बाम । करहु खरीद दैउं मैं दाम ।।
यह कहि दाम आनि गनि दिए । बात गुपत राखी निज हिए ।। ३८४ ।।
तब बनारसी बहुरौ जगे । एती बात करनकौं लगे ।।
करैं खरीद धोवावैं चीर । ढूंढ़ैं मोती मानिक हीर ।। ३८५ ।।
जोरहिं ' अजितनाथके छंद ' । लिखहिं ' नाममाला ' भरि बंद ।।
च्यारौं काज करहिं मन लाइ । अपनी अपनी बिरिया पाइ ।। ३८६ ।।
इहि बिधि च्यारि महीनें गए । च्यारि काज संपूरन भए ।।
करी ' नाममाला ' सै दोइ । राखे ' अजित छंद ' उरपोइ ।। ३८७ ।।
कपरा धोइ भयौ तैयार । लियौ मोल मोतीकौ हार ।।
अगहन मास सुकल बारसी । चले आगरै बानारसी ।। ३८८ ।।

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दोहरा

बहुरौं आए आगरै, फिरिकै दूजी बार।
तब कटले परबेजके, आनि उतारयौ भार ॥ ३८९ ॥

चौपई

कटलेमांहि ससुरकी हाट। तहां करहि भोजनकौ ठाठ ॥
रजनी सोवहिं कोठीमांहि। नित उठि प्रात नखासे जांहि ॥ ३९० ॥
फरि बैठहिं वहु करै उपाइ। मंदा कपरा कछु न बिकाइ ॥
आवहि जाहि करहि अति खेद। नहि समुझै भावीकौ भेद ॥ ३९१ ॥

दोहरा

मोती-हार लियौ हुतौ, दै मुद्रा चालीस।
सौ बेच्यौ सत्तरि उठे, मिले रुपइआ तीस ॥ ३९२ ॥

चौपई

तब बनारसी करै बिचार। भला जवाहरका ब्यापार ॥
हुए पौन दूनें इस मांहि। अब सौ वस्त्र खरीदहि नांहि ॥ ३९३ ॥
च्यारि मास लौं कीनौ धंध। नहिं बिकाइ कपरा पग बंध ॥
बैनीदास खोबरा गोत। ताकौ 'दास नरोत्तम' पोत ॥ ३९४ ॥

दोहरा

सो बनारसीकौ हितू, और बदलिआ 'थान'।
रात दिवस क्रीड़ा करहिं, तीनौं मित्र समान ॥ ३९५ ॥

चौपई

चढ़ि गाड़ीपर तीनौं डौल। पूजा हेतु गए भर कौल ॥
कर पूजा फिरि जोरे हाथ। तीनौं जनें एक ही साथ ॥ ३९६ ॥
प्रतिमा आगै भाखैं एहु। हमकौं नाथ लच्छिमी देहु ॥
जब लच्छिमी देहु तुम तात। तब फिरि करहिं तुम्हारी जात ॥ ३९७ ॥
यह कहिक आए निज गेह। तीनौं मित्र भए इक देह ॥
दिन अरु रात एकठे रहैं। आप आपनी बातैं कहैं ॥ ३९८ ॥
आयौ फागुन मास बिख्यात। बालचंदकी चली बरात ॥
ताराचंद मौठिया गोत। नेमाकौ सुत भयौ उदोत ॥ ३९९ ॥

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कही बनारसिसौं तिन बात । तू चलु मेरे साथ बरात ।।
तब अंतरधन मोती काढ़ि । मुद्रा तीस और द्वै बाढ़ि ।। ४०० ।।
बेंचि खोंचिकै आनैं दाम । कीनौ तब बरातिकौ साम ।।
चले बराति बनारसिदास । दूजा मित्र नरोत्तम पास ।। ४०१ ।।
मुद्रा खरच भए सब तिहां । ह्वै बरात फिरि आए इहां ।।
खैराबादी कपरा झारि । बेच्यौ घटे रुपइया च्यारि ।। ४०२ ।।
मूल-ब्याज दै फारिक भए । तब सु नरोत्तमके घर गए ।।
भोजन करकै दोऊ यार । बैठे कियौ परस्पर प्यार ।। ४०३ ।।

बोहरा

कहै नरोत्तमदास तब, रहौ हमारे गेह ।
भाईसौं क्या भिन्नता, कपटीसौं क्या नेह ।। ४०४ ।।
तब बनारसी ऊतर भनै । तेरे घरसौं मोहि न बनै ।।
कहै नरोत्तम मेरे भौन । तुमसौं बोलै ऐसा कौन ।। ४०५ ।।
तब हठकरि राखे घरमांहि । भाई कहै जुदाई नांहि ।।
काहू दिवस नरोत्तमदास । ताराचंद मौठिए पास ।। ४०६ ।।
बैठे तब उठि बोले साहु । तुम बनारसी पटनें जाहु ।।
यह कहि रासि देइ तिस बार । टीका काढ़ि उतारे पार ।। ४०७ ।।
आइ पार बूझे दिन भले । तीनि पुरुष गाड़ी चढ़ि चले ।।
सेवक कोउ न लीनौं गैल । तीनौं सिरीमाल नर छैल ।। ४०८ ।।

बोहरा

प्रथम नरोत्तमकौ ससुर, दुतिय नरोत्तमदास ।
तीजा पुरुष बनारसी, चौथा कोउ न पास ।। ४०९ ।।

चौपई

भाड़ा किया पिरोजाबाद । साहिजादपुरलौं मरजाद ।।
चले साहिजादेपुर गए । रथसौं उतरि पयादे भए ।। ४१० ।।
रथका भाड़ा दिया चुकाइ । सांझि आइकै बसे सराइ ।।
आगै और न भाड़ा किया । साथ एक लीया बोझिया ।। ४११ ।।
पहर डेढ़ रजनी जब गई । तब तहं मकर चांदनी भई ।।
इनके मन आई यह बात । कहहिं चलहु हूवा परभात ।। ४१२ ।।

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तीनौं जनें चले ततकाल । दै सिर बोझ बोझिया नाल ।।
चारौं भूलि परे पथमांहि । दच्छिन दिसि जंगलमैं जांहि ।। ४१३ ।।
महा बीझ बन आयौ जहां । रोवन लग्यौ बोझिया तहां ।।
बोझ डारि भाग्यौ तिस ठौर । जहां न कोऊ मानुष और ।। ४१४ ।।
तब तीनिहु मिलि कियौ बिचार । तीनि भाग कीन्हा सब भार ।।
तीनि गांठि बांधी सम भाइ । लीनी तीनिहु जनें उठाइ ।। ४१५ ।।
कबहूं कांधै कबहूं सीस । यह विपत्ति दीनी जगदीस ।।
अरध रात्रि जब भई बितीत । खिन रोवैं खिन गावैं गीत ।। ४१६ ।।
चले चले आए तिस ठांउ । जहां बसै चोरन्हकौ गांउ ।।
बोला पुरुष एक तुम कौन । गए सूखि मुख पकरी मौन ।। ४१७ ।।
इन्ह परमेसुरकी लौ धरी । वह था चोरन्हका चौधरी ।।
तब बनारसी पढ़ा सिलोक । दी असीस उन दीनी धोक ।। ४१८ ।।
कहै चौधरी आवहु पास । तुम नारायण मैं तुम्ह दास ।।
आइ बसहु मेरी चौपारि । मोरे तुम्हरे बीच मुरारि ।। ४१९ ।।
तब तीनौं नर आए तहां । दिया चौधरी थानक जहां ।।
तीनौं पुरुष भए भयभीत । हिरदैमांहि कंप मुख पीत ।। ४२० ।।

दोहरा

सूत काढ़ि डोरा बटयौ, किए जनेऊ चारि ।
पहिरे तीनि तिहूं जनें, राख्यौ एक उबारि ।। ४२१ ।।
माटी लीनी भूमिसौं, पानी लीनौं ताल ।
विप्र भेष तीनौं बनैं, टीका कीनौं भाल ।। ४२२ ।।

चौपई

पहर दोइ लौं बैठे रहे । भयौ प्रात बादर पहपहे ।।
हय-आरूढ़ चौधरी-ईस । आयौ साथ और नर बीस ।। ४२३ ।।
उनि कर जोरि नवायौ सीस । इन उठिकै दीनी आसीस ।।
कह चौधरी पंडितराइ । आवहु मारग देहुं दिखाइ ।। ४२४ ।।
पराधीन तीनौं उठि चले । मस्तक तिलक जनेऊ गले ।।
सिरपर तीनिहु लीनी पोट । तीन कोस जंगलकी ओट ।। ४२५ ।।
गयौ चौधरी कियौ निबाह । आई फत्तेपुरकी राह ।।
कहै चौधरी इस मगमांहि । जाहु हमहिं आग्या हम जांहि ।। ४२६ ।।

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फत्तेपुर इन्ह रूखन तले । ' चिरं जीव ' कहि तीनौं चले ।।
कोस दोइ दीसै लखरांउ । फिर द्वै कोस फतेपुर-गांउ ।। ४२७ ।।
आइ फतेपुर लीनी ठौर । दोइ मजूर किए तहां और ।।
बहुरौं त्यागि फतेपुर-बास । गए छ कोस इलाहाबास ।। ४२८ ।।
जाइ सराइ उतारा लिया । गंगाके तट भोजन किया ।।
बानारसी नगरमैं गयौ । खरगसेनकौ दरसन भयौ ।। ४२९ ।।
दौरि पुत्रनैं पकरे पाइ । पिता ताहि लीनौ उर लाइ ।।
पूछै पिता बात एकंत । कह्यौ बनारसि निज बिरतंत ।। ४३० ।।
सुतके बचन हिएमैं धरे । खाइ पछार भूमि गिरि परे ।।
मूर्छागति आई ततकाल । सुखमैं भयौ ऊचलाचाल ।। ४३१ ।।
धरी चारि लौं बेसुध रहे । स्वासा जगी फेरि लहलहे ।।
बानारसी नरोत्तमदास । डोली करी इलाहाबास ।। ४३२ ।।
खरगसेन कीनैं असवार । बेगि उतारे गंगापार ।।
तीनौं पुरुष पियादे पाइ । चले जौनपुर पहुंचे आइ ।। ४३३ ।।
बानारसी नरोत्तम मित्त । चले बनारसि बनज-निमित्त ।।
जाइ पास-जिन पूजा करी । ठाढ़े होइ बिरति उच्चरी ।। ४३४ ।।

अडिल्ल

सांझसमै दुबिहार, प्रात नौकारसहि ।
एक अधेला पुन्न, निरंतर नेम गहि ।।
नौकरवाली एक जाप, नित कीजिए ।
दोष लगै परभात, तौ घीउ न लीजिए ।। ४३५ ।।

दोहरा

मारग बरत जथासकति, सब चौदसि उपवास ।
साखी कीनैं पास जिन, राखी हरी पचास ।। ४३६ ।।
दोइ बिवाह सुरित (?) द्वै, आगैं करनी और ।
परदारा-संगति तजी, दुहू मित्र इक ठौर ।। ४३७ ।।
सोलह सै इकहत्तरे, सुकल पच्छ बैसाख ।
बिरति धरी पूजा करी, मानहु पाए लाख ।। ४३८ ।।

चौपई

पूजा करि आए निज थान । भोजन कीना खाए पान ।।
करै कछू ब्यौपार बिसेख । खरगसेनकौ आयौ लेख ।। ४३९ ।।

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चीठीमांही बात बिपरीत । बांचन लागे दोऊ मीत ।।
बानारसीदासकी बाल । खैराबाद हुती पिउसाल ।। ४४० ।।
ताके पुत्र भयौ तीसरौ । पायौ सुख तिनि दुख बीसरौ ।
सुत जनमैं दिन पंद्रह हुए । माता बालक दोऊ मुए ।। ४४१ ।।
प्रथम बहूकी भगिनी एक । सो तिन भेजी कियौ विवेक ।।
नाऊ आनि नारिअर दियौ । सो हम भले मूहूरत लियौ ।। ४४२ ।।
एक वार ए दोऊ कथा । संडासी लुहारकी जथा ।।
छिनमंहि अगिनि छिनक जलपात । त्यौं यह हरख-शोककी बात ।। ४४३ ।।
यह चीठी बांची तब दुंहू । जुगुल मित्र रोए करि उहूं ।।
बहुतै रुदन बनारसि कियौ । चुप ह्वै रहे कठिन करि हियौ ।। ४४४ ।।
बहुरौं लागे अपने काज । रोजगारकौ करन इलाज ।।
लेंहि देंहि थोरा अरु घना । चूंनी मानिक मोती पना ।। ४४५ ।।
कबहूं एक जौनपुर जाहि । कबहूं रहै बनारसमाहि ।।
दोऊ सकृत रहैं इक ठौर । ठानहिं भिन्न भिन्न पग दौर ।। ४४६ ।।
करहिं मसक्कति आलस नांहि । पहर तीसरे रोटी खांहि ।।
मास छ सात गए इस भांति । बहुरौं कछु पकरी उपसांति ।। ४४७ ।।
घोरा दौरहि खाइ सबार । ऐसी दसा करी करतार ।।
चीनी किलिच खान उमराउ । तिन बुलाइ दीयौ सिरपाउ ।। ४४८ ।।

दोहरा

बेटा बड़ो किलीचकौ, च्यार हजारी मीर ।
नगर जौनपुरकौ धनी, दाता पंडित बीर ।। ४४९ ।।
चीनी किलिच बनारसी, दोऊ मिले बिचित्र ।
वह यासौं किरिपा करै, यह जानै मैं मित्र ।। ४५० ।।
एहि बिधि बीते बहुत दिन, बीती दसा अनेक ।
बैरी पूरब जनमकौ, प्रगट भयौ नर एक ।। ४५१ ।।
तिनि अनेक बिधि दुख दियौ, कहौं कहां लौं सोइ ।
जैसी उनि इनसौं करी, ऐसी करै न कोइ ।। ४५२ ।।

चौपई

बानारसी नरोत्तमदास । दुहुकौं लेन न देइ उसास ।।
दोऊ खेद खिन्न तिनि किए । दुख भी दिए दाम भी लिए ।। ४५३ ।।

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मास दोइ बीते इस बीच । कहूं गयौ थौ चीनि किलीच ।।
आयौ गड़ मौवासा जीति । फिरि बनारसीसेती प्रीति ।। ४५४ ।।

दोहरा

कबहुं नाममाला पढ़ै, छंद कोस स्रुतबोध ।
करै कृपा नित एकसी, कबहुं न होइ विरोध ।। ४५५ ।।

चौपई

बानारसी कही किछु नांहि । पै उनि भय मानी मनमांहि ।।
तब उन पंच बदे नर च्यारि । तिन्ह चुकाइ दीनी यह रारि ।। ४५६ ।।
चूक्यौ झगरा भयौ अनंद । ज्यौं सुछंद खग छूटत फंद ।।
सोलह सै बहत्तरै बीच । भयौ कालबस चीनि किलीच ।। ४५७ ।।
बानारसी नरोत्तमदास । पटनें गए बनजकी आस ।।
मास छ सात रहे उस देस । थोरा सौदा बहुत किलेस ।। ४५८ ।।
फिरि दोऊ आए निज ठांउ । बानारसी जौनपुर गांउ ।।
इहां बनज कीनौ अधिकाइ । गुपत बात सो कही न जाइ ।। ४५९ ।।

दोहरा

आउ बित्त निज गृहचरित, दान मान अपमान ।
औषध मैथुन मंत्र निज, ए नव अकह-कहान ।। ४६० ।।

चौपई

तातैं यह न कही विख्यात । नौ बातन्हमैं यह भी बात ।।
कीनी बात भली अरु बुरी । पटनें कासी जौनापुरी ।। ४६१ ।।
रहे बरस द्वै तीनिहु ठौर । तब किछु भई औरकी और ।।
आगानूर नाम उमराउ । तिसकौं साहि दियौ सिरपाउ ।। ४६२ ।।
सो आवतौ सुन्यौ जब सोर । भागे लोग गए चहु ओर ।।
तब ए दोऊ मित्र सुजान । आए नगर जौनपुर थान ।। ४६३ ।।
घरके लोग कहूं छिपि रहे । दोऊ यार उतर दिसि बहे ।।
दोऊ मित्र चले इक साथ । पांउ पियादे लाठी हाथ ।। ४६४ ।।
आए नगर अजोध्यामांहि । कीनी जात रहे तहां नांहि ।।
चले चले रौनांही गए । धर्मनाथके सेवक भए ।। ४६५ ।।

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दोहरा

पूजा कीनी भगतिसौं, रहे गुपत दिन सात ।
फिरि आए घरकी तरफ, सुनी पंथमंह बात ।। ४६६ ।।
आगानूर बनारसी, और जौनपुर बीच ।
कियौ उदंगल बहुत नर, मारे करि अघमीच ।। ४६७ ।।
हक नाहक पकरे सबै, जड़िया कोठीबाल ।
हुंडीबाल सराफ नर, अरु जौंहरी दलाल ।। ४६८ ।।
काहू मारे कोररा, काहू बेड़ी पाइ ।
काहू राखे भाखसी, सबकौं देइ सजाइ ।। ४६९ ।।

चौपई

सुनी बात यह पंथिक पास । बानारसी नरोत्तमदास ।।
घर आवत हे दोऊ मीत । सुनि यह खबरि भए भयभीत ।। ४७० ।।
सुरहुरपुरकौं बहुरौं फिरे । चढ़ि घड़नाई सरिता तिरे ।।
जंगलमांहि हुतौ मौवास । जहां जाइ करि कीनौ बास ।। ४७१ ।।
दिन चालीस रहे तिस ठौर । तब लौं भई औरकी और ।।
आगानूर गयौ आगरे । छोड़ि दिए प्रानी नागरे ।। ४७२ ।।
नर द्वै चारि हुते बहुधनी । तिन्हकौं मारि दई अति घनी ।।
बांधि ल गयौ अपने साथ । हक नाहक जानै जिननाथ ।। ४७३ ।।
इस अन्तर ए दोऊ जनें । आए निरभय घर आपनें ।।
सब परिवार भयौ एकत्र । आयौ सबलसिंघकौ पत्र ।। ४७४ ।।
सबलसिंघ मौठिआ मसंद । नेमीदास साहुकौ नंद ।।
लिख्यौ लेख तिन अपने हाथ । दोऊ साझी आवहु साथ ।। ४७५ ।।

दोहरा

अब पूरबमैं जिनि रहौ, आवहु मेरे पास ।
यह चीठी साहू लिखी, पढ़ी बनारसिदास ।। ४७६ ।।
और नरोत्तमके पिता, लिख दीनौ बिरतंत ।
सो कागद आयौ गुपत, उनि बांच्यौ एकंत ।। ४७७ ।।
बांचि पत्र बानारसी, के कर दीनौ आनि ।
बांचहु ए चाचा लिखे, समाचार निज पानि ।। ४७८ ।।

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पढ़ने लगे बानारसी, लिखी आठ दस पांति ।
हेम खेम ताके तले, समाचार इस भांति ।। ४७९ ।।
खरगसेन बानारसी, दोऊ दुष्ट विशेष ।
कपटरूप तुझकौं मिले, करि धूरतका भेष ।। ४८० ।।
इनके मत जो चलहिगा, तौ मांगहिगा भीख ।
तातैं तू हुसियार रहु, यहै हमारी सीख ।। ४८१ ।।
समाचार बानारसी, बांचे सहज सुभाउ ।
तब सु नरोत्तम जोरि कर, पकरे दोऊ पाउ ।। ४८२ ।।
कहै बनारसिदाससौं, तू बंधव तू तात ।
तू जानहि उसकी दसा, क्या मूरखकी बात ।। ४८३ ।।
तब दोऊ खुसहाल ह्वै मिले होइ इक चित्त ।
तिस दिनसौं बानारसी, नित्त सराहै मित्त ।। ४८४ ।।
रीझि नरोत्तमदासकौ, कीनौ एक कबित्त ।
पढ़ै रैन दिन भाटसौ, घर बजार जित कित्त ।। ४८५ ।।

सवैया इकतीसा

नरोत्तमदासस्तुति—

नवपद ध्यान गुन गान भगवंतजीकौ,
करत सुजान दिढ़ग्यान जग मानियै ।
रोम रोम अभिराम धर्मलीन आठौ जाम,
रूप-धन-धाम काम-मूरति बखानियै ।।
तनकौ न अभिमान सात खेत देत दान,
महिमान जाके जसकौ बितान तानियै ।
महिमानिधान प्रान प्रीतम बनारसीकौ,
चहुपद आदि अच्छरन्ह नाम जानियै ।। ४८६ ।।

चौपई

बानारसि चिंतैं मनमांहि । ऐसो मित्त जगतमैं नांहि ।।
इस ही बीच चलनकौ साज । दोऊ साझी करहिं इलाज ।। ४८७ ।।
खरगसेनजी जहमति परे । आइ असाधि बैदनैं करे ।।
बानारसी नरोत्तमदास । लाहनि कछू कराई तास ।। ४८८ ।।

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संवत तिहत्तरे वैसाख । सातैं सोमवार सित पाख ।।
तब साझेका लेखा किया । सब असवाब बांटिकै लिया ।। ४८९ ।।

दोहरा

दोइ रोजनामैं किए, रहे दुहूके पास ।
चले नरोत्तम आगरै, रहे बनारसिदास ।। ४९० ।।
रहे बनारसि जौनपुर, निरखि तात वेहाल ।
जेठ अंधेरी पंचमी, दिन बितीत निसिकाल ।। ४९१ ।।
खरगसेन पहुचे सुरग, कहवति लोग विख्यात ।
कहां गए किस जोनिमैं, कहै केवली बात ।। ४९२ ।।
कियौ सोक बानारसी, दियौ नैन भरि रोइ ।
हियौ कठिन कीनौ सदा, जियौ न जगमैं कोइ ।। ४९३ ।।

चौपई

मास एक बीत्यौ जब और । तब फिरि करी बनजकी दौर ।।
हुंडी लिखी, रजत सै पंच । लिए करन लागे पट संच ।। ४९४ ।।
पट खरीदि कीनौं एकत्र । आयौ बहुरि साहुकौ पत्र ।।
लिखा सिंघजी चीठीमांहि । तुझ बिनु लेखा चूकै नाहिं ।। ४९५ ।।
तातैं तू भी आउ सिताब । मैं बूझौं सो देहि जुवाब ।।
बानारसी सुनत बिरतंत । तजि कपरा उठि चले तुरंत ।। ४९६ ।।
बांभन एक नाम सिवराम । सौंप्यौ ताहि बस्त्रका काम ।।
मास असाढ़मांहि दिन भले । बानारसी आगरै चले ।। ४९७ ।।

दोहरा

एक तुरंगम नौं नफर, लीनें साथि बनाइ ।
नांउ घैसुआ गांउमैं, बसे प्रथम दिन आइ ।। ४९८ ।।
ताही दिन आयौ तहां, और एक असबार ।
कोठीबाल महेसुरी, बसै आगरै बार ।। ४९९ ।।

चौपई

षट सेबक इक साहिब सोइ । मथुराबासी बांभन दोइ ।।
नर उनीसकी जुरी जमाति । पूरा साथ मिला इस भांति ।। ५०० ।।
कियौ कौल उतरहिं इकठौर । कोऊ कहूं न उतरै और ।।
चले प्रभात साथ करि गोल । खेलहिं हंसहिं करहिं कल्लोल ।। ५०१ ।।

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दोहरा

गांउ नगर उल्लंघि बहु, चलि आए तिस ठांउ ।
जहां घाटमपुरके निकट, बसै कोररा गांउ ।। ५०२ ।।
उतरे आइ सराइमैं, करि अहार विश्राम ।
मथुरावासी बिप्र द्वै, गए अहीरी-धाम ।। ५०३ ।।
दुहुमैं बांभन एक उठि, गयौ हाटमैं जाइ ।
एक रुपैया काढ़ि तिनि, पैसा लिए भनाइ ।। ५०४ ।।
आयौ भोजन साज ले, गयौ अहीरी-गेह ।
फिरि सराफ आयौ तहां, कहै रुपैया एह ।। ५०५ ।।
गैरसाल है बदलि दै, कहै बिप्र मम नांहि ।
तेरा तेरा यौं कहत, भई कलह दुहुमांहि ।। ५०६ ।।
मथुराबासी बिप्रनैं, मारचौ बहुत सराफ ।
बहुत लोग बिनती करी, तऊ करै नहिं माफ ।। ५०७ ।।
भाई एक सराफकौ, आइ गयौ इस बीच ।
मुख मीठी बातें करै, चित कपटी नर नीच ।। ५०८ ।।
तिन बांभनके बस्त्र सब, टकटोहे करि रीस ।
लखे रुपैया गांठिमैं, गिनि देखे पच्चीस ।। ५०९ ।।
सबके आगै फिरि कहै, गैरसाल सब दर्व ।
कोतवालपै जाइके, नजरि गुजारौ सर्व ।। ५१० ।।
बिप्र जुगल मिसु करि परे, मृतकरूप धरि मौन ।
बनिया सबनि दिखाइ लै, गयौ गांठि निज भौन ।। ५११ ।।
खरे दाम घरमैं धरे, खोटे ल्यायौं जोरि ।
मिही कोथलीमांहि भरि, दीनी गांठि मरोरि ।। ५१२ ।।
लेइ कोथली हाथमैं, कोतबालपै जाइ ।
खोटे दाम दिखाइकै, कही बात समुझाइ ।। ५१३ ।।

चौपई

साहिबजी ठग आये घनें । फैले फिरहिं जांहि नहिं गनें ।।
संध्यासमै हौंहि इक ठौर । ह्वै असबार करहु तब दौर ।। ५१४ ।।
यह कहि बनिक निरालो भयौ । कोतबाल हाकिमपै गयौ ।।
कही बात हाकिमके कान । हाकिम साथ दियौ दीबान ।। ५१५ ।।

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कोतबाल दीबान समेत । सांझ समै आए ज्यौं प्रेत ।।
पुरजन लोक साथि सै चारि । जनु सराइमैं आई धारि ।। ५१६ ।।
बैठे दोऊ खाट बिछाइ । बांभन दोऊ लिए बुलाइ ।।
पूछैं मुगल कहहु तुम कौन । कहै बिप्र मथुरा मम भौन ।। ५१७ ।।
फिरि महेसरी लियौ बुलाय । कहं तू जाहि कहांसौं आइ ।।
तब सो कहे जौनपुर गांउ । कोठीबाल आगरे जांउ ।। ५१८ ।।
फिरि बनारसी बोलै बोल । मैं जौंहरी करौं मनिमोल ।।
कोठी हुती बनारसमांहि । अब हम बहुरि आगरै जांहि ।। ५१९ ।।

दोहरा

साझी नेमा साहुके, तखत जौनपुर भौन ।
ब्यौपारी जगमैं प्रकट, ठगके लच्छन कौन ।। ५२० ।।

चौपई

कही बात जब बानारसी । तब वे कहन लगे पारसी ।।
एक कहै ए ठग तहकीक । एक कहै ब्यौपारी ठीक ।। ५२१ ।।
कोतवाल तब कहै पुकारि । बांधहु बेग करहु क्या रारि ।।
बोलै हाकिमकौ दीबान । अहमक कोतबाल नादान ।। ५२२ ।।
राति समै सूझ नहिं कोइ । चोर साहुकी निरख न होइ ।।
कछु जिन कहौ रातिकी राति । प्रात निकसि आवैगी जाति ।। ५२३ ।।
कोतबाल तब कहै बखानि । तुम ढूंढ़हु अपनी पहिचानि ।।
कोररा, घाटमपुर अरु बरी । तीनि गांउकी सरियति करी ।। ५२४ ।।
और गांउ हम मानंहि नांहि । तुम यह फिकिर करहु हम जांहि ।।
चले मुगल बादा बदि भोर । चौकी बैठाई चहुओर ।। ५२५ ।।

दोहरा

सिरीमाल बानारसी, अरु महेसुरीजाति ।
करहिं मंत्र दोऊ जनें, भई छमासी राति ।। ५२६ ।।

चौपई

पहर राति जब पिछली रही । तब महेसुरी ऐसी कही ।।
मेरो लहुरा भाई हरी । नांउ सु तौ ब्याहा है बरी ।। ५२७ ।।

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हम आए थे इहां बरात । भली यादि आई यह बात ।।
बानारसी कहै रे मूढ़ । ऐसी बात करी क्यौं गूढ़ ।। ५२८ ।।

दोहरा

तब महेसुरी यौं कहै, भयसौं भूली मोहि ।
अब मोकौं सुमिरन भई, तू निचिंत मन होहि ।। ५२९ ।।

चौपई

तब बनारसी हरषित भयौ । कछु इक सोच रह्यौ कछु गयौ ।।
कबहू चितकी चिंता भगै । कबहू बात झूठसी लगै ।। ५३० ।।
यौं चिंतवत भयौ परभात । आइ पियादे लागे घात ।।
सूली दै मजूरके सीस । कोतवाल भेजी उनईस ।। ५३१ ।।
ते सराइमैं डारी आनि । प्रगट पियादे कहैं बखानि ।।
तुम उनीस प्रानी ठग लोग । ए उनीस सूली तुम जोग ।। ५३२ ।।

दोहरा

घरी एक बीते बहुरि, कोतबाल दीबान ।
आए पुरजन साथ सब, लोग करन निदान ।। ५३३ ।।

चौपई

तब बनारसी बोलै बानि । बरीमांहि निकसी पहचानि ।।
तब दीबान कहै स्याबास । यह तो बात कही तुम रास ।। ५३४ ।।
मेरे साथ चलो तुम बरी । जो किछु उहां होइ सो खरी ।।
महेसुरी हूओ असबार । अरु दीबान चला तिस लार ।। ५३५ ।।
दोऊ जनें बरीमैं गए । समधी मिले साहु तब भए ।।
साहु साहुघर कियौ निवास । आयौ मुगल बनारसी पास ।। ५३६ ।।
आइ कह्यौ तुम सांचे साहु । करहु माफ यह भया गुनाहु ।।
तब बनारसी कहै सुभाउ । तुम साहिब हाकिम उमराउ ।। ५३७ ।।
जो हम कर्म पुरातन कियौ । सो सब आइ उदै रस दियौ ।।
भावी अमिट हमारा मता । इसमैं क्या गुनाह क्या खता ।। ५३८ ।।
दोऊ मुगल गए निज धाम । तहं बनारसी कियौ मुकाम ।।
दोऊ बांभन ठाढ़े भए । बोलहिं दाम हमारे गए ।। ५३९ ।।

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दोहरा

पहर एक दिन जब चढ़्यौ, तब बनारसीदास ।
सेर छ सात फुलेल ले, गए मुगलके पास ।। ५४० ।।
हाकिमकौं दीवानकौं, कोतबालके गेह ।
जथाजोग सबकौं दियौ, कीनौं सबसन नेह ।। ५४१ ।।
तब बनारसी यौं कहै, आजु सराफ ठगाइ ।
गुनहगार कीजै उसहि, दीजै दाम मंगाइ ।। ५४२ ।।
कहै मुगल तुझ बिनु कहैं, मैं कीन्हौं उस खोज ।
वह निज सब ही साथ लै, भागा उस ही रोज ।। ५४३ ।।

सोरठा

मिला न किस ही ठौर, तुम निज डेरे जाइ करि ।
सिरिनी बांटहु और, इन दामनिकी क्या चली ।। ५४४ ।।

चौपई

तब बनारसी चिंतै आम । बिना जोर नहिं आवहि दाम ।।
इहां हमारा किछु न बसाय । तातैं बैठि रहै घर जाय ।। ५४५ ।।

दोहरा

यह विचार करि कीनी दुवा । कही जु होना था सो हुवा ।।
आए अपने डेरेमांहि । कही बिप्रसौं दमिका (?) नाहिं ।। ५४६ ।।
भोजन कीनौ सबनि मिलि, हूओ संध्याकाल ।
आयौ साहु महेसुरी, रहे राति खुसहाल ।। ५४७ ।।

चौपई

फिरि प्रभात उठि मारग लगे । मनहु कालके मुखसौं भगे ।।
दूजै दिन मारगके बीच । सुनी नरोत्तम हितकी मीच ।। ५४८ ।।

दोहरा

चीठी बैनीदासकी, दीनी काहू आनि ।
बांचत ही मुरछा भई, कहूं पांउ कहुं पानि ।। ५४९ ।।
बहुत भांति बानारसी, कियौ पंथमैं सोग ।
समुझावै मानै नहीं, घिरे आइ बहु लोग ।। ५५० ।।

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लोभ मूल सब पापकौ, दुखकौ मूल सनेह ।
मूल अजीरन ब्याधिकौ, मरन मूल यह देह ।। ५५१ ।।
ज्यौं त्यौं कर समुझे बहुरि, चले होहि असबार ।
क्रम क्रम आए आगरै, निकट नदीके पार ।। ५५२ ।।
तहां बिप्र दोऊ भए, आड़े मारग बीच ।
कहहिं हमारे दाम बिनु, भई हमारी मीच ।। ५५३ ।।

चौपई

कही सुनी बहुतेरी बात । दोऊ बिप्र करैं अपघात ।।
तब बनारसी सोचि बिचारि । दीनैं दामनि मेटी रारि ।। ५५४ ।।

दोहरा

बारह दिए महेसुरी, तेरह दीनैं आप ।
बांभन गए असीस दै, भए बनिक निष्पाप ।। ५५५ ।।
अपने अपने गेह सब, आए भए निचीत ।
रोए बहुत बनारसी, हाइ मीत हा मीत ।। ५५६ ।।
घरी चारि रोए बहुरि, लगे आपने काम ।
भोजन करि संध्या समय, गए साहुके धाम ।। ५५७ ।।

चौपई

आवंहि जांहि साहुके भौन । लेखा कागद देखै कौन ।।
बैठे साहु बिभौ-मदमांति । गावहिं गीत कलावत-पांति ।। ५५८ ।।
धुरै पखावज बाजै तांति । सभा साहिजादेकी भांति ।।
दीजहि दान अखंडित नित्त । कवि बंदीजन पढ़हि कबित्त ।। ५५९ ।।
कही न जाइ साहिबी सोइ । देखत चकित होइ सब कोइ ।।
बानारसी कहै मनमांहि । लेखा आइ बना किस पांहि ।। ५६० ।।
सेवा करी मास द्वै चारि । कैसा बनज कहांकी रारि ।।
जब कहिए लेखेकी बात । साहु जुवाब देहि परभात ।। ५६१ ।।
मासी घरी छमासी जाम । दिन कैसा यह जानै राम ।।
सूरज उदै अस्त है कहां । विषयी विषय-मगन है जहां ।। ५६२ ।।
एहि बिधि बीते बहुत दिन, एक दिवस इस राह ।
चाचा बेनीदासके, आए अंगासाह ।। ५६३ ।।

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अंगा चंगा आदमी, सज्जन और बिचित्र ।
सो बहनेऊ सिंघका, बानारसिका मित्र ।। ५६४ ।।
तासौं कही बनारसी, निज लेखेकी बात ।
भैया, हम बहुतै दुखी, दुखी नरोत्तम तात ।। ५६५ ।।
तातैं तुम समुझाइकै, लेखा डारहु पारि ।
अगिली फारकती लिखौ, पिछिलो कागद फारि ।। ५६६ ।।

चौपई

तब तिस ही दिन अंगनदास । आए सबलसिंघके पास ।।
लेखा कागद लिए मंगाइ । साझा पाता दिया चुकाइ ।। ५६७ ।।
फारकती लिखि दीनी दोइ । बहुरौं सुखुन करै नहिं कोइ ।।
मता लिखाइ दुहूपै लिया । कागद हाथ दुहूका दिया ।। ५६८ ।।
न्यारे न्यारे दोऊ भए । आप अपने घर उठि गए ।।
सोलह सै तिहत्तरे साल । अगहन कृष्णपक्ष हिमकाल ।। ५६९ ।।
लिया बनारसि डेरा जुदा । आया पुन्य करमका उदा ।।
जो कपरा था बांभन हाथ । सो उनि भेज्या आछे साथ ।। ५७० ।।
आई जौनपुरीकी गांठि । धरि लीनी लेखेमों सांठि ।।
नित उठि प्रात नखासे जांहि । वेचि मिलावहिं पूंजीमांहि ।। ५७१ ।।
इस ही समय ईति विस्तरी । परी आगरै पहिली मरी ।।
जहां तहां सब भागे लोग । परगट भया गांठिका रोग ।। ५७२ ।।
निकसै गांठि मरै छिनमांहि । काहूकी बसाइ किछु नांहि ।।
चूहे मरहिं बैद मरि जांहि । भयसौं लोग अंन नहिं खांहि ।। ५७३ ।।
नगर निकट बांभनका गांउ । सुखकारी अजीजपुर नांउ ।।
तहां गए बानारसिदास । डेरा लिया साहुके पास ।। ५७४ ।।
रहहिं अकेले डेरेमांहि । गर्भित बात कहनकी नांहि ।।
कुमति एक उपजी तिस थान । पूरबकर्मउदै परवांन ।। ५७५ ।।
मरी निबर्त्त भई विधि जोग । तब घर घर आए सब लोग ।।
आए दिन केतिक इक भए । बानारसी अमरसर गए ।। ५७६ ।।
उहां निहालचंदकौ ब्याह । भयौ बहुरि फिरि पकरी राह ।।
आए नगर आगरेमांहि । सबलसिंघकें आवहिं जांहि ।। ५७७ ।।

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दोहरा

हुती जु माता जौनपुर, सो आई सुत पास ।
खैराबाद बिवाहकौं, चले बनारसिदास ।। ५७८ ।।

चौपई

करि बिवाह आए घरमांहि । मनसा भई जातकौं जांहि ।।
बरधमान कुंअरजी दलाल । चल्यौ संघ इक तिन्हके नाल ।। ५७९ ।।
अहिछत्ता-हथनापुर-जात । चले बनारसि उठि परभात ।।
माता और भारजा संग । रथ बैठे धरि भाउ अभंग ।। ५८० ।।
पचहत्तरे पोह सुभ घरी । अहिछत्तेकी पूजा करी ।।
फिरि आए हथनापुर जहां । सांति कुंथु अर पूजे तहां ।। ५८१ ।।

दोहरा

सांति-कुंथ-अरनाथकौ, कीनौ एक कबित्त ।
ताकौं पढ़ै बनारसी, भाव भगतिसौं नित्त ।। ५८२ ।।

छप्पै

श्री बिसेन नरेस, सूर नृप राइ सुदंसन ।
अचिरा सिरिआ देवि, करहिं जिस देव प्रसंसन ।।
तसु नंदन सारंग, छाग नंदावत लंछन ।
चालिस पैंतिस तीस, चाप काया छबि कंचन ।।
सुखरासि बनारसिदास भनि, निरख मन आनंदई ।
हथिनापुर, गजपुर, नागपुर, सांति कुंथ अर बंदई ।। ५८३ ।।

चौपई

करी जात मन भयौ उछाह । फिरयौ संघ दिल्लीकी राह ।।
आई मेरठि पंथ बिचाल । तहां बनारसीकी न्हनसाल ।। ५८४ ।।
उतरा संघ कोटके तले । तब कुटुंब जात्रा करि चले ।।
चले चले आए भर कोल । पूजा करी कियौ थौ कौल ।। ५८५ ।।
नगर आगरै पहुचे आइ । सब निज निज घर बैठै जाइ ।।
बानारसी गयौ पौसाल । सुनी जती श्रावककी चाल ।। ५८६ ।।
बारह व्रतके किए कबित्त । अंगीकार किए धरि चित्त ।।
चौदह नेम संभालै नित्त । लागै दोष करै प्राछित्त ।। ५८७ ।।

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नित संध्या पड़िकौना करै । दिन दिन व्रत बिशेषता धरै ।।
गहै जैन मिथ्यामत बमै । पुत्र एक हूवा इस समै ।। ५८८ ।।
छिहत्तरे संवत आसाढ़ । जनम्यौ पुत्र धरमरुचि बाढ़ ।।
बरस एक बीत्यौ जब और । माता मरन भयौ तिस ठौर ।। ५८९ ।।
सतहत्तरे समै मा मरी । जथासकति कछु लाहनि करी ।।
उनासिए सुत अरु तिय मुई । तीजी और सगाई हुई ।। ५९० ।।
वेगा साहु कूकड़ी गोत । खैराबाद तीसरी पोत ।।
समय अस्सिए ब्याहन गए । आए घर गृहस्थ फिरि भए ।। ५९१ ।।
तब तहां मिले अरथमल ढोर । करैं अध्यातम वातैं जोर ।।
तिनि बनारसीसौं हित कियौ । समैसार नाटक लिखि दियौ ।। ५९२ ।।
राजमल्लनैं टीका करी । सो पोथी तिनि आगै धरी ।।
कहै बनारसिसौं तू बांचु । तेरे मन आवेगा सांचु ।। ५९३ ।।
तब बनारसि बांचै नित्त । भाषा अरथ बिचारै चित्त ।।
पावै नहीं अध्यातम पेच । मानै बाहिज किरिआ हेच ।। ५९४ ।।

दोहरा

करनीकौ रस मिटि गयौ, भयौ न आतमस्वाद ।
भई बनारसिकी दसा, जथा ऊंटकौ पाद ।। ५९५ ।।

चौपई

बहुरौं चमत्कार चित भयौ । कछु वैराग भाव परिनयौ ।।
'ग्यान-पचीसी' कीनी सार । 'ध्यान-बतीसी' ध्यान विचार ।। ५९६ ।।
कीनैं 'अध्यातमके गीत' । बहुत कथन बिबहार-अतीत ।।
'सिवमंदिर' इत्यादिक और । कबित अनेक किए तिस ठौर ।। ५९७ ।।
जप तप सामायिक पड़िकौन । सब करनी करि डारी बौन ।।
हरी-बिरति लीनी थी जोइ । सोऊ मिटी न परमिति कोइ ।। ५९८ ।।
ऐसी दसा भई एकंत । कहौं कहां लौं सो बिरतंत ।।
बिनु आचार भई मति नीच । सांगानेर चले इस बीच ।। ५९९ ।।
बानारसी बराती भए । तिपुरदासकौं ब्याहन गए ।।
ब्याहि ताहि आए घरमांहि । देवचढ़ाया नेवज खांहि ।। ६०० ।।
कुमती चारि मिले मन मेल । खेला पैंजारहुका खेल ।।
सिरकी पाग लैंहि सब छीनि । एक एककौं मारहिं तीनि ।। ६०१ ।।

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दोहरा

चन्द्रभान बानारसी, उदैकरन अरु थान ।
चारौं खेलहिं खेल फिरि, करहिं अध्यातम ग्यान ।। ६०२ ।।
नगन होंहिं चारौं जनें, फिरहिं कोठरीमांहि ।
कहहिं भए मुनिराज हम, कछू परिग्रह नांहि ।। ६०३ ।।
गनि गनि मारहिं हाथसौं, मुखसौं करहिं पुकार ।
जो गुमान हम करतहे, ताके सिर पैजार ।। ६०४ ।।
गीत सुनैं बातैं सुनैं, ताकी बिंग बनाइ ।
कहैं अध्यातममैं अरथ, रहैं मृषा लौ लाइ ।। ६०५ ।।

चौपई

पूरब कर्म उदै संजोग । आयौ उदय असाता भोग ।।
तातैं कुमत भई उतपात । कोऊ कहै न मानै बात ।। ६०६ ।।
जब लौं रही कर्मबासना । तब लौं कौन विथा नासना ।।
असुभ उदय जब पूरा भया । सहजहि खेल छूटि तब गया ।। ६०७ ।।
कहहिं लोग श्रावक अरु जति । बानारसी खोसरामती ।
तीनि पुरुषकी चलै न बात । यह पंडित तातैं विख्यात ।। ६०८ ।।
निंदा थुति जैसी जिस होइ । तैसी तासु कहै सब कोइ ।।
पुरजन बिना कहे नहि रहै । जैसी देखै तैसी कहै ।। ६०९ ।।

दोहरा

सुनी कहै देखी कहै, कलपित कहै बनाइ ।
दुराराधि ए जगत जन, इन्हसौं कछु न बसाइ ।। ६१० ।।

चौपई

जब यह धूमधाम मिटि गई । तब कछु और अवस्था भई ।।
जिनप्रतिमा निंदै मनमांहि । मुखसौं कहै जो कहनी नांहि ।। ६११ ।।
करै बरत गुरु सनमुख जाइ । फिरि भानहि अपने घर आइ ।।
खाहि रात दिन पसुकी भांति । रहै एकंत मृषामदमांति ।। ६१२ ।।

दोहरा

यह बनारसीकी दसा, भई दिनहु दिन गाढ़ ।
तब संबत चौरासिया, आयौ मास असाढ़ ।। ६१३ ।।

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भयौ तीसरी नारिकै, प्रथम पुत्र अवतार ।
दिवस कैकु रहि उठि गयौ, अलपआयु संसार ।। ६१४ ।।

चौपई

छत्रपति जहांगीर दिल्लीस । कीनौ राज बरस बाईस ।।
कासमीरके मारग बीच । आवत हुई अचानक मीच ।। ६१५ ।।
मासि चारि अंतर परवांन । आयौ साहिजिहां सुलतान ।।
बैठ्यौ तखत छत्र सिर तानि । चहू चक्कमैं फेरी आनि ।। ६१६ ।।

दोहरा

सोलह सै चौरासिए, तखत आगरे थान ।
बैठ्यौ नाम धराय प्रभु, साहिब साहि किरान ।। ६१७ ।।
फिरि संवत पच्चासिए, बहुरि दूसरी बार ।
भयौ बनारसिके सदन, दुतिय पुत्र अवतार ।। ६१८ ।।

चौपई

बरस एक द्वै अंतर काल । कथा-शेष हूओ सो बाल ।।
अलप आउ ह्वै आवहिं जांहि । फिर सतासिए संवतमांहि ।। ६१९ ।।
बानारसीदास आबास । त्रितिय पुत्र हूओ परगास ।।
उनासिए पुत्री अवतरी । तिन आऊषा पूरी करी ।। ६२० ।।
सब सुत सुता मरनपद गहा । एक पुत्र कोऊ दिन रहा ।।
सो भी अलप आउ जानिए । तातैं मृतकरूप मानिए ।। ६२१ ।।
क्रम क्रम बीत्यौ इक्यानवा । आयौ सोलहसै बानवा ।।
तब तांई धरि पहिली दसा । बानारसी रह्यौ इकरसा ।। ६२२ ।।

दोहरा

आदि अस्सिआ बानवा, अंत बीचकी बात ।
कछु औरौं बाकी रही, सो अब कहौं बिख्यात ।। ६२३ ।।
चले बरात बनारसी, गए चाटसू गांउ ।
बच्छा-सुतकौं ब्याहकै, फिरि आए निज ठांउ ।। ६२४ ।।
अरु इस बीचि कबीसुरी, कीनी बहुरि अनेक ।
नाम 'सुक्तिमुकतावली,' किए कवित सौ एक ।। ६२५ ।।

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' अध्यातम बत्तीसिका, ' ' पैड़ी ' ' फागु धमाल ' ।
कीनी ' सिंघुचतुर्दसी, ' फूटक कवित रसाल ।। ६२६ ।।
' शिवपच्चीसी ' भावना, ' सहस अठोत्तर नाम ' ।
' करमछतीसी ' ' भूलना ', अंतर रावन राम ।। ६२७ ।।
बरनी ' आंखैं दोइ बिधि, ' करी ' बचनिका ' दोइ ।
' अष्टक ' ' गीत ' बहुत किए, कहौं कहा लौं सोइ ।। ६२८ ।।
सोलह सै बानवै लौं, कियौ नियत-रस-पान ।
पै कबीसुरी सब भई, स्यादवाद-परवांन ।। ६२९ ।।
अनायास इस ही समय, नगर आगरे थान ।
रूपचंद पंडित गुनी, आयौ आगम-जान ।। ६३० ।।

चौपई

तिहुना साहु देहुरा किया । तहां आइ तिनि डेरा लिया ।।
सब अध्यातमी कियौ बिचार । ग्रंथ बंचायौ गोमटसार ।। ६३१ ।।
तामैं गुनथानक परवांन । कह्यौ ग्यान अरु क्रिया-बिधान ।।
जो जिय जिस गुन-थानक होइ । तैसी क्रिया करै सब कोइ ।। ६३२ ।।
भिन्न भिन्न बिवरन बिस्तार । अंतर नियत बहिर बिवहार ।।
सबकी कथा सबै बिधि कही । सुनिकै संसै कछुव न रही ।। ६३३ ।।
तब बनारसी औरै भयौ । स्यादवाद परिनति परिनयौ ।।
पांड़े रूपचंद गुर पास । सुन्यौ ग्रंथ मन भयौ हुलास ।। ६३४ ।।
फिरि तिस समै बरस द्वै बीच । रूपचंदकौं आई मीच ।।
सुनि सुनि रूपचंदके बैन । बानारसी भयौ दिढ़ जैन ।। ६३५ ।।

दोहरा

तब फिरि और कबीसुरी, करी अध्यातममांहि ।
यह वह कथनी एकसी, कहुं विरोध किछु नांहि ।। ६३६ ।।
हृदैमांहि कछु कालिमा, हुती सरदहन बीच ।
सोऊ मिटि समता भई, रही न ऊंच न नीच ।। ६३७ ।।

चौपई

अब सम्यक् दरसन उनमान । प्रगट रूप जानै भगवान ।।
सोलह सै तिरानवै वर्ष । समैसार नाटक धरि हर्ष ।। ६३८ ।।

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भाषा कियौ भानके सीस । कवित सातसै सत्तीस ॥
अनेकांत परनति परिनयौ । संवत आठ आनन्द भयौ ॥ ६३९ ॥
तब बनारसीके घर बीच । त्रितिय सुखकी आठै मीच ॥
बानारसी बहुत दुख कियौ । भयौ सोकसौं व्याकुल हियौ ॥ ६४० ॥
जगमैं मोह महा बलवान । करै एक सम ज्ञान अज्ञान ॥
बरस दोइ बीते इस भांति । तब न मोह दोइ उपसांति ॥ ६४१ ॥

दोहरा

कही पचावन बरस लौं, बानारसिकी बात ॥
तीनि बिवाहीं भारजा, सुता दोइ सुत सात ॥ ६४२ ॥
नौ बालक हूए मुए, रहे नारि नारि नर दोइ ।
ज्यौं तरवर पतझार ह्वै, रहैं ठूंठसे होइ ॥ ६४३ ॥
तत्त्वदृष्टि जो देखिए, सत्यारथकी भांति ।
ज्यौं जाकौ परिगह घटै, त्यौं ताकौं उपसांति ॥ ६४४ ॥
संसारी जानै नहीं, सत्यारथकी बात ।
परिगहसौं मानै बिभौ, परिगह बिन उतपात ॥ ६४५ ॥
अब बनारसीके कहौं, बरतमान गुन दोष ।
विद्यमान पुर आगरे, सुखसौं रहै सजोष ॥ ६४६ ॥

चौपई

भाषाकवित अध्यातममांहि । पटतर और दूसरौ नांहि ॥
छमावंत संतोषी भला । भली कवित पढ़िवेकी कला ॥ ६४७ ॥
पढ़ै संसकृत प्राकृत सुद्ध । विविध-देसभाषा-प्रतिबुद्ध ॥
जानै सबद अरथकौ भेद । ठानै नही जगतकौ खेद ॥ ६४८ ॥
मिठबोला सबहीसौं प्रीति । जैन धरमकी दिढ़ परतीति ॥
सहनसील नहिं कहै कुबोल । सुथिरचित्त नहिं डावांडोल ॥ ६४९ ॥
कहै सबनिसौं हित उपदेस । हृदै सुष्ट न दुष्टता लेस ॥
पररमनीकौ त्यागी सोइ । कुबिसन और न ठानै कोई ॥ ६५० ॥
हृदय सुद्ध समकितकी टेक । इत्यादिक गुन और अनेक ॥
अलप जघन्न कहे गुन जोइ । नहि उतकिष्ट न निर्मल कोइ ॥ ६५१ ॥

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अथ दोषकथन

कहे बनारसिके गुन जथा । दोषकथा अब बरनौं तथा ।।
क्रोध मान माया जलरेख । पै लछिमीकौ लोभ बिसेख ।। ६५२ ।।
पोतै हास कर्मका उदा । घरसौं हुवा न चाहै जुदा ।।
करै न जप तप संजम रीति । नही दान-पूजासौं प्रीति ।। ६५३ ।।
थोरे लाभ हरख बहु धरै । अलप हानि बहु चिंता करै ।।
मुख अवद्य भाषत न लजाइ । सीखै भंडकला मन लाइ ।। ६५४ ।।
भाखै अकथकथा बिरतंत । ठानै नृत्य पाइ एकंत ।।
अनदेखी अनसुनी बनाइ । कुकथा कहै सभामंहि आइ ।। ६५५ ।।
होइ निमग्न हास रस पाइ । मृषावाद बिनु रहा न जाइ ।।
अकस्मात भय ब्यापै घनी । ऐसी दसा आइ करि बनी ।। ६५६ ।।
कबहूं दोष कबहुं गुन कोइ । जाकौ उदौ सो परगट होइ ।।
यह बनारसीजीकी बात । कही थूल जो हुती बिख्यात ।। ६५७ ।।
और जो सूछम दसा अनंत । ताकी गति जानै भगवंत ।।
जे जे बातैं सुमिरन भंई । तेते बचनरूप परिनंई ।। ६५८ ।।
जे बूझी प्रमाद इह मांहि । ते काहूपै कही न जांहि ।।
अलप थूल भी कहै न कोइ । भाषै सो जु केवली होइ ।। ६५९ ।।

दोहरा

एक जीवकी एक दिन, दसा होहि जेतीक ।
सो कहि सकै न केवली, जानै जद्यपि ठीक ।। ६६० ।।
मनपरजैधर अबधिधर, करहिं अलप चितौन ।
हमसे कीट पतंगकी, बात चलावै कौन ।। ६६१ ।।
तातैं कहत बनारसी, जीकी दसा अपार ।
कछू थूलमैं थूलसी, कही बहिर बिबहार ।। ६६२ ।।
बरस पंच पंचास लौं, भाख्यौ निज बिरतंत ।
आगै भावी जो कथा, सो जानै भगवंत ।। ६६३ ।।
बरस पचाबन ए कहे, बरस पचाबन और ।
बाकी मानुष आउमैं, यह उतकिष्टी दौर ।। ६६४ ।।

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बरस एक सौ दस अधिक, परमित मानुष आउ ।
सोलहसै अट्ठानबै, समै बीच यह भाउ ।। ६६५ ।।
तीनि भांतिके मनुज सब, मनुजलोकके बीच ।
बरतहिं तीनौं कालमैं, उत्तम, मध्यम, नीच ।। ६६६ ।।

अथ उत्तम नर यथा—

जे परदोष छिपाइकै, परगुन कहैं विशेष ।
गुन तजि निज दूषन कहैं, ते नर उत्तम भेष ।। ६६७ ।।

अथ मध्यम नर यथा—

जे भाखहिं पर-दोष-गुन, अरु गुन-दोष सुकीउ ।
कहहिं सहज ते जगतमैं, हमसे मध्यम जीउ ।। ६६८ ।।

अथ अधम नर यथा—

जे परदोष कहैं सदा, गुन गोपहिं उर बीच ।
दोष लोपि निज गुन कहैं, ते जगमैं नर नीच ।। ६६९ ।।
सोलह सै अट्ठानबै, संबत अगहनमास ।
सोमबार तिथि पंचमी, सुकल पक्ष परगास ।। ६७० ।।
नगर आगरेमैं बसै, जैनधर्म श्रीमाल ।
बानारसी बिहोलिआ, अध्यातमी रसाल ।। ६७१ ।।

चौपई

ताके मन आई यह बात । अपनौ चरित कहौं बिख्यात ।।
तब तिनि बरस पंच पंचास । परमित दसा कही मुख भास ।। ६७२ ।।
आगै जु कछु होइगी और । तैसी समुझैंगे तिस ठौर ।।
बरतमान नर-आउ बखान । बरस एक सौ दस परवांन ।। ६७३ ।।

दोहरा

तातैं अरध कथान यह, बानारसी चरित्र ।
दुष्ट जीव सुनि हंसहिंगे, कहहिं सुनहिंगे मित्र ।। ६७४ ।।
सब दोहा अरु चौपाई, छसै पिचत्तरि मान ।
कहहिं सुनहिं बांचहिं पढ़हिं, तिन सबकौ कल्याण ।। ६७५ ।।

इति श्री अर्द्धकथानक अधिकारः । सम्पूर्णः । शुभमस्तु ।

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